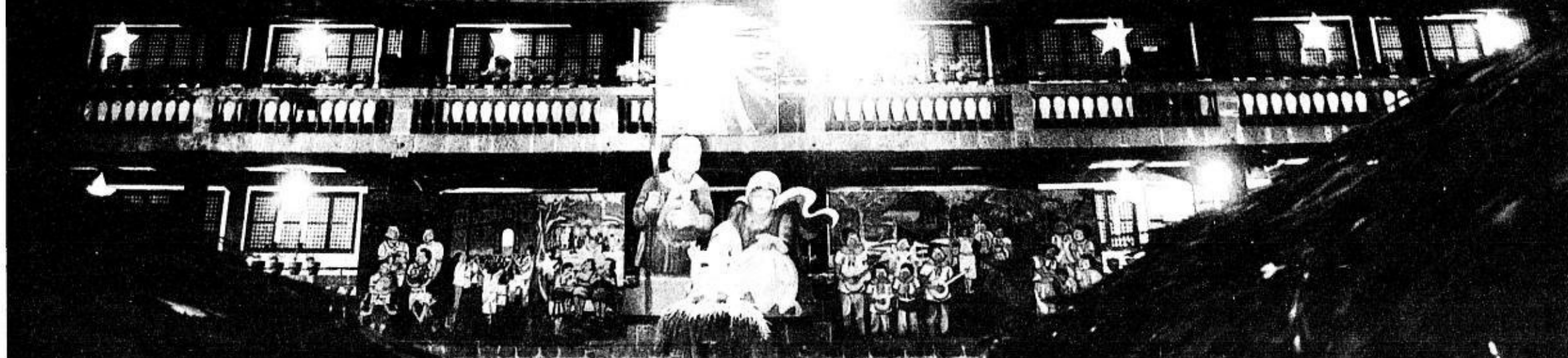




May you be filled with joys only Christmas brings!



SAVIOR'S BIRTH. A giant Nativity scene, locally known as "belen," is displayed outside the St. Joseph's Church, site of the famous Bamboo Organ, in Las Piñas City. It depicts the newborn Jesus, Mary and Joseph. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Broadcaster murdered

Davao anticorruption crusader 5th journalist slain in '07

By Dennis Jay Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—A RADIO BROADCASTER WHO HAD DENOUNCED alleged corruption in the building of the "People's Park" in this city and government malfeasance will not be spending Christmas today with his four children.

An assassin riding tandem on a motorcycle with an accomplice gunned down Ferdie Lintuan at 9:30 a.m. yesterday as the 51-year-old journalist was driving his Volkswagen, police said.

Known to his colleagues as "Batman" or Batang Mandaya, Lintuan had just finished his morning broadcast at radio

dxGO and had stopped at an intersection when the motorcycle sidled up and two shots from a .45 cal. pistol rang out. Lintuan was hit in the head and chest. A widower, he lost his wife to cancer some years ago.

He was the fifth journalist to be killed

BROADCASTER/A7

It's orange Christmas for Jalosjos in prison

By Inquirer Mindanao
and Leila B. Salaverria
in Manila

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ORANGE IS the color of child rapist Romeo Jalosjos' holiday despite his mother's wish for a "white Christmas" to mark his homecoming.

Orange is the color of the prisoners' uniform at the San Ramon Penal Colony, where the former Zamboanga del Norte lawmaker was brought hours after he was rearrested in Dapitan City early on Sunday.

And if members of Jalosjos' family are nursing certain ideas, they will have to reckon with Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Gonzalez yesterday said in Manila that officials of the penal colony some 30 kilometers away from Zamboanga City would have to get permission if they're thinking of letting the convict spend the Christmas Eve *noche buena* with family and friends in the comfort of his home.

"They will have to get my permission first," Gonzalez said. "I don't think they will stick their necks out for him."

But Gonzalez also said that as far as he knew, Jalosjos had made no request to be allowed home for Christmas.

Asked whether he would say yes if asked, he said: "We'll cross the bridge when we get there."

HEALTH/A7

IT'S ORANGE/A6

70th Christmas for tree that survived 1945 atomic bomb

TOKYO—WARREN NOBUAKI IWATAKE's family has seen more than its share of calamity.

When he was still a child, his father was lost at sea off Hawaii. With no breadwinner, his family was forced to move to Japan, where Iwatake was drafted during the war. He lost a brother when the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima.

But through it all one thing has remained constant.

The tree.

His parents bought it in 1937, and his family has brought it out every Christmas since, without fail, even when that meant risking arrest.

"This tree was a shining light, because it was a symbol of unity in my family," Iwatake said as he and his wife put the final touches on the frail, 1-meter-tall (3-foot-tall) heirloom that is, once again this year, the centerpiece of their small, neatly kept apartment in Tokyo.

"We have put this tree up every

70TH CHRISTMAS/A6



NICE PAINTING. The lupus-stricken child says Jesus wants her to paint.

REM ZAMORA

Prolific 11-year-old painter shares earnings with sick

By TJ Burgonio

NICE, HER MOTHER INSISTS, IS not a child prodigy. But at 11, she has become a prolific painter: She can finish five paintings in one night, spending 30 minutes on each piece.

What is more amazing to her parents and their Christian community

is that the girl, who exhibited the "gift" after she was diagnosed with lupus, has been sharing her earnings from her paintings with the sick.

"That's what Jesus wants," the soft-spoken, chubby fifth grader explains shyly in an interview at the office of the Chosen Generation Christian Church in a crowded neighbor-

PROLIFIC/A6

Health experts warn revelers on deadly cholesterol

By Tessa R. Salazar

'TIS THE SEASON FOR WHAT MANY health experts dub the "Merry Christmas coronary" or the "Happy New Year heart attack."

How to survive the killer cholesterol? Some experts think getting rid of animal protein will do it, and even go so far as to urge Filipinos to look beyond the holiday season and forego animal meat altogether.

It may seem impossible, even loony—until you read the credentials and long-term research and studies these experts bring to the credibility table, and to the public at large through e-mail interviews with the INQUIRER.

"Filipinos should not adopt everything American—especially the fast-food chains and the garbage food that they sell," T. Colin Campbell, a Jacob Gould Schurman professor emeritus of nutritional biochemistry of Cornell

From pope to Pepe: Seeing stars at Metro film fest

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

IT MAY NOT BE THE ROSE BOWL OR DISNEYLAND's Main Street parades, but it has become an annual tradition in local show biz.

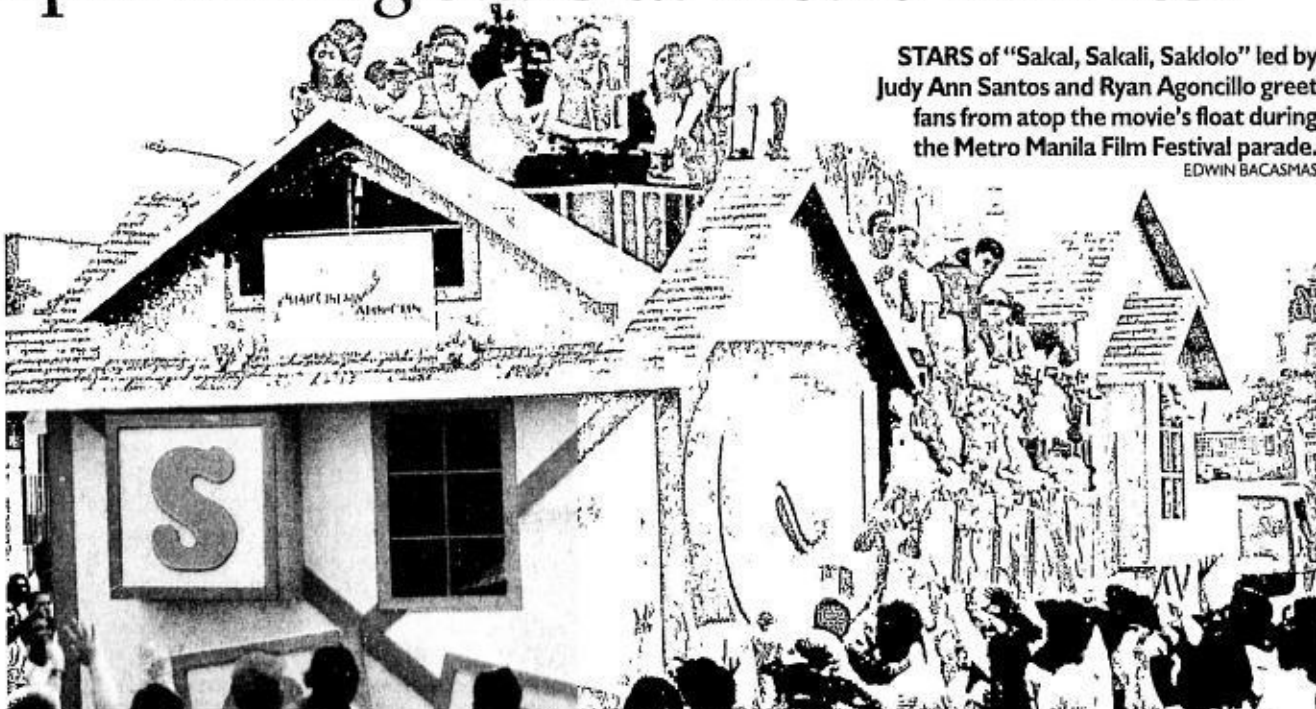
On Christmas Eve, while the rest of the city prepares for the *noche buena* and Midnight Mass, the Metro Manila Film Festival's Parade of Stars, now on its 33rd year, gathered the local entertainment industry's brightest stars.

There are nine entries in this year's film festival.

There were also the scene-stealing crowd pleasers, like a fake pope played by bit player Rey Bayona and rock icon Pepe Smith.

The "pope" and Pepe rode the "Banal" float, together with a real-life SWAT team and actors Christopher de Leon, Alfred Vargas, Paolo Contis and Paolo Paraiso. It was the first MMFF parade for both the "pope" and Pepe.

FROM POPE/A6



STARS of "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" led by Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo greet fans from atop the movie's float during the Metro Manila Film Festival parade.

EDWIN BACASMAS



81-year-old queen joins YouTube gen

LONDON—FIFTY YEARS AFTER her first televised Christmas message, Queen Elizabeth II will set a new milestone on Tuesday by posting her annual Christmas message on the video-sharing website YouTube.

In a preview of this year's speech, the 81-year-old monarch is seen standing in Buckingham

81-YEAR-OLD/A7

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laong	Partly Cloudy	Tacoloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clerk Zone	Partly Cloudy	Don. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Taguig	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Catapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI GUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/12/24/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FRONT PAGE

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 21 6 4 9 4 2
 (In exact order)
 Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening
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AFP wary of Reds' truce

NPA ceasefire declaration insincere, says military

By Nildko Dizon and Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY YESTERDAY SAID IT WOULD REMAIN VIGILANT despite the communist rebels' declaration of a four-day ceasefire during the holidays, saying the gesture was insincere.

Philippine Army chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano said the ceasefire was "a reactionary move meant to show a semblance of humanity."

Given the standing order to intensify attacks against the government and civilians, the ceasefire announcement was "an insincere gesture" and the military will remain vigilant, he said.

"We view the NPA offer as a treacherous ploy meant to create a false sense of security among soldiers and policemen so that they (rebels) can carry out their offensives," Yano said.

On Sunday, communist rebels announced they would observe a four-day ceasefire for Christmas and New Year.

"As a matter of policy and tradition, the guns of the New People's Army will be silent on Dec. 24-25 and on Dec. 31-Jan. 1, 2008, in deference to the people's holiday celebrations," Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesman of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said in a statement.

But Rosal said the order to intensify tactical attacks against security forces remained and fighters would be on active defense during the ceasefire, which he said has nothing to do with the government's 22-day Christmas truce.

Hours before Rosal's announcement, about 50 communist rebels attacked the Hinabangan town hall in Samar, killing a militiaman and seizing several assault weapons.

The guerrillas had rejected the 22-day ceasefire by the 120,000-strong military, calling it a sham and vowing to intensify attacks against troops.

NPA rebels killed three unarmed Marine soldiers on their way to market in Palawan on Dec. 16, the start of the ceasefire, the military said.

Rosal said such ceasefires have been used by soldiers in the past to intensify surveillance and counterinsurgency operations.

Rosal cited reports of continuing military operations even after it declared a ceasefire

starting Dec. 16, including those in General Nakar in Quezon and Surigao del Sur.

Top officials of the Philippine National Police (PNP) said that if the CPP-NPA is really sincere, it should have declared a ceasefire earlier this month.

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao told the INQUIRER yesterday that if communist rebels brand government ceasefire as "insincere," then CPP-NPA four-day ceasefire was "more insincere" after communist rebels attacked a police station in Hinabangan, Samar.

"Their ceasefire should have been declared much earlier, if they are really sincere. But the ceasefire was declared after the attack in Samar. That is not good," Pagdilao said.

Military spokesperson, Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, said the "lower echelons of the NPA" have been known to disregard the declarations of their leadership.

"Let's wait and see if indeed their element will abide with their declaration. Making announcements is different from having it observed and implemented on the ground," Bacarro said in a text message.

Both the military and the CPP-NPA have accused each other of using the holiday truce as a ploy to easily carry out attacks.

As this developed, the police has not received any specific intelligence report on any possible terror attack in the country during the Christmas season.

Reacting to a travel advisory issued by the Australian embassy, Pagdilao said the police remain on heightened alert for Christmas.

"We have monthly advisories coming from the Nica (National Intelligence Coordinating Agency) on terrorist threat and our present threat level is high. But we have no specific intelligence pointing to or detailing any terror activities," Pagdilao said. With AP report



CHRISTMAS BEHIND BARS

Hands reach out for Christmas gifts distributed by the the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to inmates of the female dorm who are not having any visitors on Christmas Day. The program, called the Kalinga sa Presong Walang Dalaw ngayong Kapaskuhan, was launched yesterday by the BJMP chief, director Armando Llamasares.

JOAN BONDOC

Pray for the poor, Cardinal tells faithful

By Beverly T. Natividad

MANILA ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO Cardinal Rosales yesterday urged the Filipino faithful to pray for the poor this Christmas.

"Our prayer and pleading, like a Christian prayer of hope and peace, is for the poor to be paid more attention to in our Christian country's economy and laws. This will eventually bring peace to everyone," said Rosales in his Christmas message.

The Manila Archbishop has brought the faithful's attention back to the poor. Just as they were featured with importance in the birth of Jesus, he said, the poor also merits the special attention in the country's laws.

Rosales said Jesus' birth itself shows the significance he gave to the poor, choosing to be born unnoticed, and welcomed only among the poor.

In the same light, Rosales said, a Christian believer's community like that of the Philippines should always resolve a question of justice

between the rich and the poor—where land, salaries, or food are the issues—towards the poor.

"Even the law's interpretation and application must favor the poor, like the Good News being preached first to the poor," he said.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president and Jaro (Iloilo) Archbishop Angel Lagdameo has also reminded the faithful to take its cue from the humble birth of Jesus.

In an interview over Catholic-run Radio Veritas, Lagdameo said Christ's birth in a manger shows us how it is to be human and how to be humane.

Amid the material gifts, the parties and the celebrations this season, he said, people should not forget that the real meaning of Christmas is Christ's coming into people's lives—to take part in their sorrows and laughter, as well as in their work and struggles in life.

For their part, the country's evangelical churches took the oc-

casión to remind Filipinos that underneath all the merrymaking and gift-giving this season, the real focus of Christmas is on two things: giving glory to God and promoting peace around us.

"Christmas should be a time to give glory to God and to bring peace around us," said Bishop Efraim Tendaro, national director of the Philippine Council of Churches (PCEC), in a statement.

The PCEC is the largest network of evangelicals or Protestant Christian denominations, churches, mission groups and para-church organizations in the country.

Tendaro urged the public to take the time to ask themselves whether the things they do in their lives result in giving God the recognition that is due him.

He said whether one is in government or managing a business or fulfilling civic and domestic responsibilities, all these endeavors will only have value if they are done to "exalt His name."

WHAT'S INSIDE

TARLAC AIMS
to become 'Belen'
capital of RP

/A4

COLDER CHRISTMAS
Expect a colder
Christmas Day today

/A8

A mother's Christmas wish: Bring my daughter back alive

By Nina Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—"THEY took Sherlyn alive, they should give her back alive," said Linda Cadapan, mother of one of two University of the Philippines coeds reportedly abducted by military men.

Cadapan believes Sherlyn, reportedly snatched in Barangay San Miguel, Hagonoy, Bulacan on June 26 last year by armed men believed to be Army soldiers, is still alive despite reports that she could be one of the two burned bodies recently found in Pangasinan.

She said they had plans to exhume the body to avoid doubts that 30-year-old Sherlyn is dead. The other missing UP coed is Karen Empeño, who is only 23 years old.

"My only wish this Christmas is for Sherlyn to go home alive," Cadapan said.

Both girls were activists and community organizers. They are among hundreds of victims of extrajudicial killings or enforced disappearances since the government stepped up its anti-insurgency campaign in 2001.

Cadapan said their last Christmas with Sherlyn was in 2005.

It is a tradition of the Cadapan family to celebrate Christmas in their house in this university town, even if most of her children already have their own families.

"This is the second time Sherlyn is absent. It is really painful and sad. I am not used to Christmas without one of my children," she said in Filipino.

Cadapan recounted how her five children, who were usually serious, would turn rowdy and playful upon seeing each other.

She said she did not think Sherlyn would be home this holiday season because she "knew what kind of military men were holding her right now."

"But at the back of my mind, I still hope she is here with us," Cadapan said.

Her family holds on to a "gut feeling" that Sherlyn may still be alive.

"Several times, her siblings said they dreamt she went back home," she said.

She said she saw hope from the testimony of Bulacan farmer Ray-

mund Manalo during the hearing of the petition for the new writ of amparo that she and Connie Empeño, the mother of Karen, had filed.

Manalo, who had escaped his captors, told the court he saw the two UP students in some of the Army camps where he and his brother Reynaldo were also detained.

Manalo had said he saw and had talked to Sherlyn several times. He and his brother Reynaldo were allegedly abducted in February 2006 and escaped in August this year.

According to his sworn statement, he first saw the UP students in Camp Tecson in Bulacan, which was used by the 24th Infantry Battalion, in September last year.

Sherlyn was chained to a bed and was repeatedly tortured, he said. Another farmer, Manuel Merino, was reportedly abducted with the two girls.

"We are happy that information about them is now emerging. But as a mother, it is difficult for me to hear what has happened to her," she said. "I cannot describe the pain and anger."

'Ninong' Erap is back

By Jocelyn R. Uy

YES, NINONG (THE GODFATHER) IS BACK home this Christmas.

Spending Christmas for the first time in six years outside his gilded prison in Tanay, Rizal, deposed President Joseph Estrada is now more accessible to his *inaanaks* (godchildren).

This was among the many things that Estrada enumerated yesterday when asked how Christmas Day will be different for him as a free man.

Estrada, ousted by a 4-day civilian-military revolt in 2001, was convicted of plunder then granted executive clemency last October.

For the past six Christmases he had spent in jail, *noche buena* was limited to his immediate family and the prison guards, he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

"My *inaanaks* could not come because Tanay was too far," Estrada said, referring to his 15-hectare estate in the hills of Rizal province where he was detained for from 2004 to 2007.

He said that Yuletide in detention was a simple affair. He would just invite the parish priest to hold a mass there in the afternoon of Dec. 24.

On Oct. 26 or two months before Christmas, Estrada walked out a free man after accepting executive clemency from President

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

At the time of his conviction in September, he had said he would never accept a pardon from Arroyo, who assumed power after the so-called EDSA 2 revolt.

At any rate, the move have allowed him to freely enjoy all the niceties of the Yuletide season without having to seek the consent of the Sandiganbayan, which tried his landmark plunder case.

The 70-year-old former president sounded jolly on the phone. He disclosed that aside from his relatives and grandchildren, he was expecting his godchildren to visit him during the holidays. The gift-giving part, however, did not worry him.

"They're all grown up. Some of them are already married. They are now the ones who give me gifts," he said with a chuckle.

But "freedom and the new lease on life is the best Christmas gift I can receive," he stated.

Estrada said yesterday morning, that he planned to visit to his ailing 102-year-old mother, Mary Ejercito, at the San Juan Medical Center, then attend the Simbang Gabi that is held before midnight at the San Juan town plaza before proceeding to his Polk Street residence for a "modest" *noche buena*—mostly Filipino delicacies such as *sapin-sapin*, hot pan de sal and *puto*—to be shared by his family and relatives.

DENR TO DILG?

Atienza denies rumor of impending transfer

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY LITO ATIENZA has squelched rumors he was moving to the Department of Interior and Local Government next year, declaring that he has no intention of moving out.

"The rumors are flying thick and fast. That's not true," Atienza, who was appointed to the Arroyo Cabinet after the May elections this year, told reporters.

Atienza said President Macapagal-Arroyo has not "intimated," much less discussed the matter with him. "The President has not intimated even. And therefore, there's no basis for the rumor," he said.

Rumors had been swirling that Atienza would be appointed to the top DILG post by January next year, and that losing senatorial candidate and former Rep. Prospero Pichay was among those being eyed to replace him at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The rumors had spread so fast that a DENR employee even expressed the wish at last Friday's pre-Christmas party Mass that Atienza should not be moved to another department, a remark that the latter immediately corrected.

"To put an end to that, I had to react. I couldn't let it go, even if it was a positive wish coming from an employee," he said in a briefing. "Why should I transfer?"

Atienza, who took over the post from then Environment Secretary and now Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes last Aug. 1, said he had come to enjoy his job, and had not entertained the idea of doing another.

"I'd like to state for the record that I've accepted the challenge of addressing the responsibilities of DENR," said the former Manila mayor, whose appointment stirred a furor from some environment groups who accused him of being anti-environment.

"The challenges excite me personally, and fall right within the philosophy of public service," he said.

Staunch ally

Atienza, a staunch ally of the President's, said he was thankful that he had been given an opportunity to "inculcate in our people that we have what it takes to progress."

"All we need is to handle all of these gifts around us, starting with the gift of life, gift of the environment, gift of natural resources, gift of intelligence, gift of industry," he said.

Since assuming the top DENR post, Atienza has taken steps to erase perceptions by green groups that he was a "tree-cutter" and create an image as a "protector of the environment."

(Following his appointment, critics reminded the President about Atienza's order to cut down trees inside the Arroceros Park in Manila in 2003 to give way to a city school building.)

COTABATO CITY—AN IMPROVISED BOMB exploded Monday in Cotabato City, wounding at least three people including a 2-year-old boy, days after Australia warned of a possible terrorist attack in the country over Christmas.

The bomb—made from an 81-mm mortar with a cell phone triggering device hidden in a sack with sand and partly buried on the ground—exploded on a sidewalk fronting a barber shop, said police Senior Insp. Samson Obatay.

"This looks like a terrorist attack," Obatay, head of the city's police mobile

3 wounded in Cotabato blast

group, told The Associated Press.

All three injury victims suffered shrapnel wounds not considered life-threatening, he added.

The bomb went off at about 1:30 p.m. Police said it was planted beside the Fourth of October Barbershop along Macacua Street.

The Australian Embassy posted a travel advisory on its website Saturday warning Australians to steer clear of places frequented by foreigners, and strongly advised against travel in Mindanao, where al-Qaida-linked militants are active. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao, and AP*

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Tarlac aims to become 'Belen' capital of RP

By Russell Arador
Inquirer Central Luzon

TARLAC CITY—THE CAMPAIGN to create an annual tourist attraction for Tarlac has gained ground with the launch this year of "Belenismo sa Tarlac," a project that seeks to transform the province into the "Belen capital" of the Philippines.

Belenismo in Spanish means the art of making Belen, a representation of the Nativity scene in which the Holy Family (Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus) is visited by the three wise men who came to the manger through the guidance of a star.

This year's Belen Festival ran from September, when the first Belen-making workshop was conducted, to Dec. 16, the day the winning entries were chosen and awarded.

Organizers have intended the festival to become an annual event in the province.

Belen-making competition

"The [Belen-making] competitions brought out the very best in Tarlaqueños," said Isabel Cojuangco-Suntay, who led the project. "I am pleasantly surprised to discover how truly creative we are as a people."

Suntay, sister of former Ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., is president of the Tarlac Heritage Foundation, a non-government organization.

Aside from Suntay, the organizers include Tarlac Gov. Victor Yap; businessman Jun Baron, president of the Tarlac Conventions and Visitors Bureau; and Fr. Alex Bautista, head of the Tarlac Diocese's Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church.

About four months ago, the organizing committee of the "Belenismo sa Tarlac" started holding lectures and workshops where participants were taught to make Belen using various materials like styropor and carton.

"The project was conceptualized to help create an annual tourist attraction for Tarlac, develop a Belen-related cottage industry and, of course, preserve the religious importance of remembering the birth of Jesus Christ," said Bautista.

On Dec. 16, Sen. Loren Legarda led the awarding of 16 winners in five categories—personal, grand, monumental, municipal and diorama.

Life-size

In the "personal" and "diorama" (closed Belen with three sides) categories, entries were transported to the judging site and submitted by individuals.

In the "monumental" category, entries were life-size, while entries in the "grand" category were at least three meters high.

In the "municipal" category, participated in exclusively by municipal governments, the entries were larger than life-size.

The Tarlac police office, led by Senior Supt. Nicanor Bartolome, won the first prize in the grand category with its Christmas lights-rich entry placed along the Barangay Salapungan portion of MacArthur Highway in Tarlac City.

Bartolome said their Belen was built by at least 24 policemen, "some of whom had been trained as architects, engineers, artists and carpenters before they joined



FIRST PRIZE winner is this one by the Tarlac provincial police office, made by more than two dozen policemen, some of whom had background in electrical engineering and architecture.

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the [police] service."

The entry by Asiatic Hotel, located in Barangay San Sebastian in Tarlac City, placed second. It caught the judges' eyes because it is made up entirely of *abaniko* (native hand fan). The entry by restaurant Coconut Grill was third.

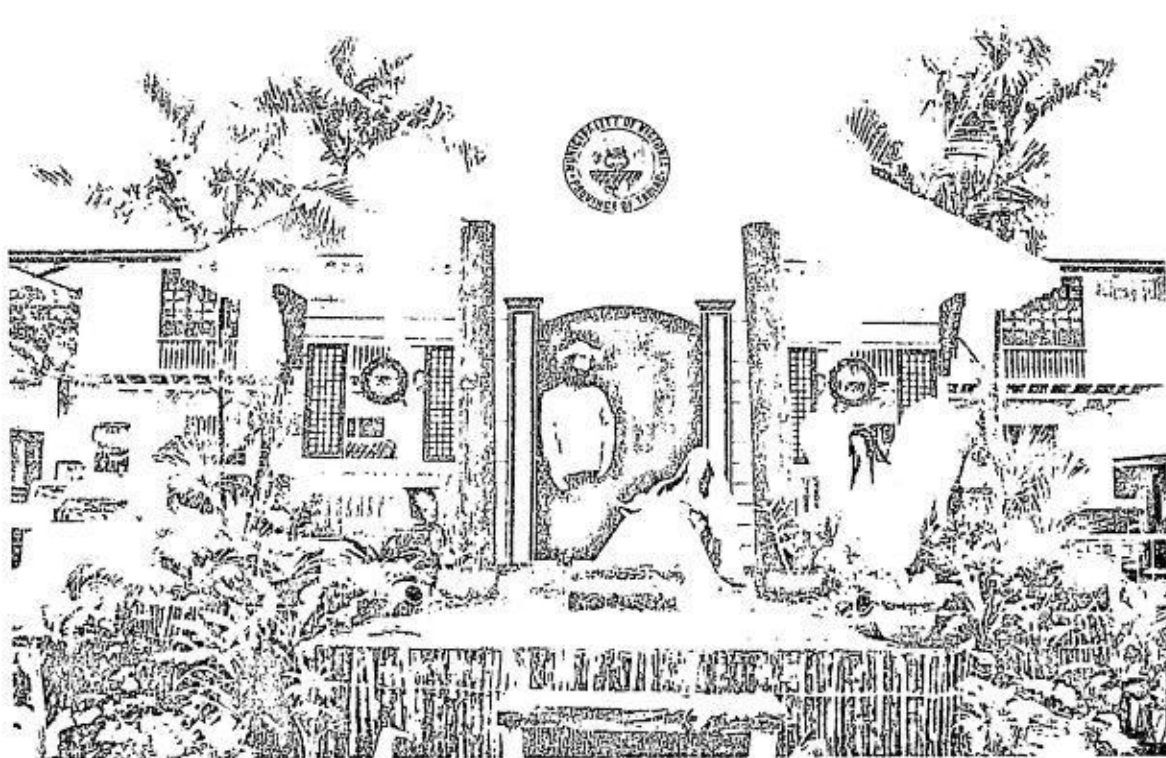
In the municipal category, the top prize went to Victoria town while San Clemente town was second. The towns of Ramos and Capas tied for third place.

Personal category

In the personal category, Larni Castro of Barangay Padapada in Sta. Ignacia town tied with Roland Rigor of Tarlac City, for the top prize. They were followed by Ma. Rachele Simon of Barangay Maliwalo, also in Tarlac City.

In the monumental category, the winners were St. Josemaria Escriva Parish, first place; Metrotown Mall, second; and Estipona High School in Pura town, third.

In the diorama-making contest, the first prize win-



GRAND BELEN in Victoria, Tarlac won first prize in the municipal category.

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ner, Albert Dancel, placed the Holy Family inside a clay pot and seen through a crack shaped like the map of Tarlac.

Equally interesting is the second prize winner created by provincial government em-

ployee Ramon Espinosa, who set the birth of Jesus Christ in front of the lobby of the Tarlac capitol.

To house the collection of dioramas, the provincial government put up the Museo de Tarlac, located a

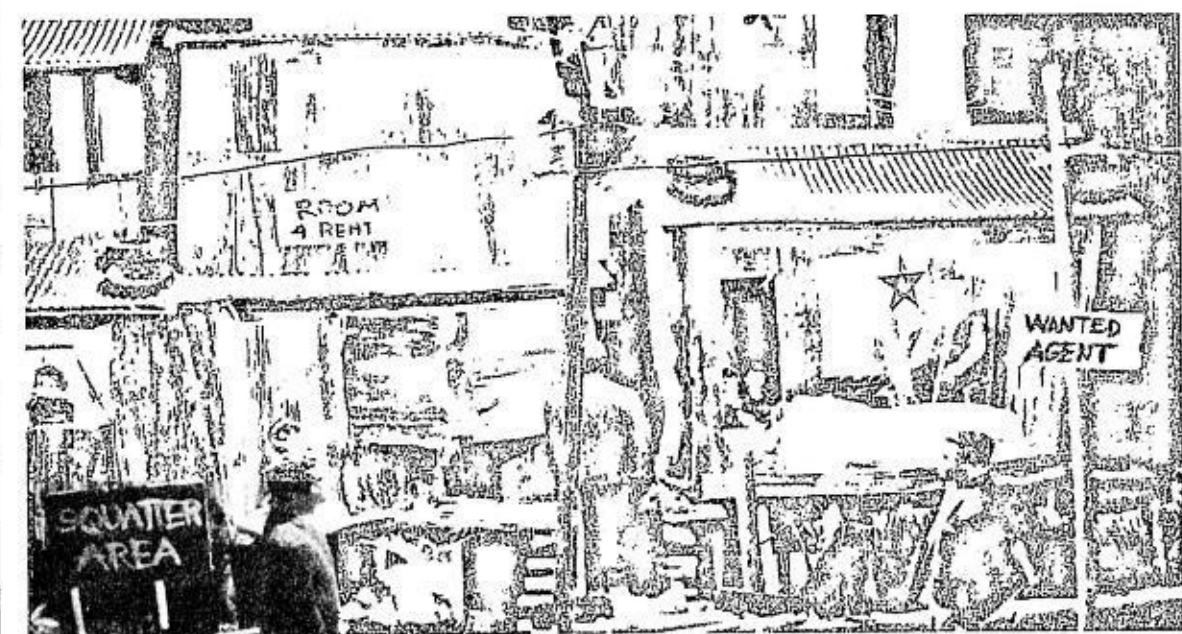
few meters from the Diwa ng Tarlac Building in Tarlac City.

Bautista, who teaches liturgical arts at the University of Santo Tomas, said although Makati City is also holding Belen contests yearly, Tarlac's activity is unique.

Tradition of Belen

"Ours is different because it's not just a contest. We're starting a tradition of Belen. For example, during Holy Week we can start visiting Belen sites, Visita Belen, and pray before them. There are prayers for Visita Belen, translated into different local languages like Ilokano, Kapampangan and Tagalog, meditating on the mystery of the incarnation of our Lord," he said.

"Hindi lang siya mababaw na palabas (It's not only for show). People are invited to pray. That's why the Museo and the Belen exhibits were blessed because the principle is that they are objects for you to pray. So that you will remember the mystery of the birth of the Son of God."



MODERN DAY REALITY is depicted in this Belen, which set the birth of Jesus Christ in a squatter community. This one placed third in the diorama category. Fr. Alex Bautista, who conceptualized the event, cited this as example of how the Belen can "reflect the prevailing social and economic conditions in society."

RUSSELL ARADOR

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 25, 2007
Christmas

1st Reading:
2nd Reading:
Gospel:

Is 52:7-10
Heb 1:1-6
John 1:1-5, 9-14

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God; he was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him and without him nothing came to be. Whatever has come to be, found life in him, life which for humans was also light. Light that shines in the dark: light that darkness could not overcome.

For the Light was coming into the world, the true Light that enlightens everyone. He was already in the world and through him the world was made, the very world that did not know him. He came to his own, yet his own people did not receive him; but all who have received him he empowers to become children of God for they believe in his Name.

These are born, but without seed or carnal desire or will of man; they are born of God. And the Word was made flesh; he had his tent pitched among us, and we have seen his Glory, the Glory of the only Son coming from the Father: fullness of truth and loving-kindness.

Commentary

It is time to cry out, to announce glad tidings: Our God is King. Our God has come to bring us joy and to see the restoration of all our lives, to comfort and redeem us. Our God now belongs to all the nations and his bare arm is for all. This is the power of God, the power of a newborn who is the Son of God made flesh, through whom he created the universe. He is the reflection of the Father's glory and he is the sustaining power of life for all in the Spirit. We are called to worship the Trinity as we stand before the crèche and wonder at our God among us. But we must be careful not to get caught up in the piety of the child, for this child is the grown man, beloved of God, the Word since the beginning, the light, the truth, God of God. This child/man/God, when he came, was even rejected by his own. This child is the enduring love of God and we have been given a share in this fullness of God. This is the only God we have ever seen. This is Jesus revealing God. This is what it means to be human. God is incarnated as one of us—we now meet God in every human being, in the Word, and in God's enduring Love/Eucharist/the Body of Christ—all humanity. The way we love one another is the way we love God. God is born in us today.

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SOURCE: FA Bureau of Agricultural Statistics

It's a colder Christmas Day

EXPECT A COLDER CHRISTMAS Day weather today.

Yesterday's humid weather will turn colder today when the cold weather-associated northeast monsoon sweeps back into the country, weather forecasters said yesterday.

"It will be a little colder especially at dawn," said forecaster Rene Paciente of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

The northeast monsoon or "amihan" will sweep down from northern China through Taiwan toward northern and central Luzon, and Metro Manila, and replace the warm air prevailing in some parts of the country, he said.

Monday's 22.6 degree centigrade recorded in Quezon City will drop by one or two degrees today, Pa-

ciente said.

Yesterday's humid weather was brought by the easterly, or warm, moist air from the northern Pacific Ocean, and aggravated by the fact that heat from the ground couldn't escape through the clouds into the atmosphere, he said.

The cold temperature is expected to last at least until Wednesday, according to Paciente.

The northeast monsoon, which swept down from the plateaus of mainland Asia to the Philippines beginning in late October, is expected to peak in February, according to Pagasa.

Today, rains are forecast to fall in the eastern sections of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, while the rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

Yesterday, a shallow low pressure

area 120 km east of Visayas induced rainshowers in eastern Visayas and the Bicol region. But it's expected to dissipate in the next 24 hours.

So far, the bureau has not monitored any incoming typhoon.

Meanwhile, Pagasa doesn't expect 2007 to be the warmest year in the country because of the moderate La Niña.

Lourdes Tibig, head of Pagasa's climate data section and member of the Philippine delegation to the recent United Nations conference on climate change in Indonesia, however, stressed this was just an observation.

She said they had yet to collate their data on the lowest temperatures from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 to make a conclusion. The World Meteorological Organization has indicated that 2007 promises to be the warmest year globally.

From pope to Pepe: Seeing stars at Metro film fest

From page A1

As expected, the star of "Enteng Kabisote 4," Vic Sotto, simply clad in red T-shirt, elicited the loudest cheers from the crowd gathered in front of the Shrine of Jesus Church and the SMX Convention Center.

Sen. Bong Revilla, in full futuristic warrior costume, led his movie's youthful cast on the "Resiklo" float, which hewed closely to the film's "recycled robots" theme. According to Andrea Bautista-Ynares, Imus producer and Revilla's sister, the float cost almost P500,000.

The "Banal" float, which boasts a faux police helicopter, cost roughly P300,000. "We got a good discount," said Ina Alegre of ComGuild, producer of "Banal."

These two floats were more expensive than the cash prizes for Best Float runners-up.

"Resiklo" won the best float award, meeting the criteria announced by Ric Camaligan, chair of the MMFF parade committee, for best depicting the movie's theme and for having the most impact on the public. It pocketed P500,000.

"Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" placed second for P300,000 and "Bahay Kubo," built at the cost of P250,000, copped third for P100,000.

Shortened route

Learning from past film festivals, the parade route had been considerably shortened this year, said Camaligan.

"Last year, we covered 26 kilometers. We started at the Quezon City Circle and ended at the Cultural Center of the Philippines complex. This year, the parade began at the SM

Mall of Asia and ended at the Quirino Grandstand, via Roxas Boulevard. That's roughly 8 to 9 kilometers," Camaligan noted.

The festival committee decided on a shorter parade to prevent problems encountered in the past.

"Last year, the float of 'Zsazsa Zaturrnah' overheated, while the float of 'Super Noypi' ran out of gas," Camaligan recalled.

He related that some stars had to go down the floats, midway during the parade, to answer the call of nature. "That caused delays," he pointed out. "We've learned from past mistakes."

In spite of the hassles, the stars seemed to look forward to the annual parade.

More organized

"It'll be a long day for us," said Vargas, "Banal" star. "But the parade seems more orga-

nized this year."

He said he had always been excited to attend the parade. "This is my chance to personally greet our fans."

"I don't mind the hassles for as long as I get to see the smiles on the faces of our fans," agreed Judy Ann Santos, star of "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," sequel to last year's top grosser, "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo."

"It feels great to be able to touch the hearts and lives of Pinoys this Christmas season," concurred Ryan Agoncillo, Santos' partner in "Sakal."

"This is really for the Pinoy masses to enjoy," said Lorna Tolentino, who plays an OFW's wife in "Katas ng Saudi."

"Apart from helping us promote our movies, it helps us reconnect with our fans and friends in show business. This parade allows us to give back to the movie industry,"

said Revilla, "Resiklo" star. "Since I'm on a break from the Senate, I can spend time with my colleagues from the movie industry."

"This is our chance to get together," said Gina Pareño, Santos' costar in "Sakal."

Déjà vu

For Pareño, Santos and Agoncillo, the parade was like déjà vu. "We were together last year. I hope we will be together again next year," Pareño quipped.

For Vargas, it is his third film fest parade. "Every year, my films get good reviews and positive ratings from the Cinema Evaluation Board."

Vargas' costar, Christopher de Leon, said he had lost count of the number of festivals he had joined in the past. "I've had film fest entries since the 1970s," De Leon said.

He doesn't mind the long hours

spent under the sun, he insisted. "It helps me get a good tan," he joked.

Turning serious, he noted that the film fest "is for the small people of the movie industry."

Beneficiaries

"The festival is primarily geared to benefit movie workers," asserted Espiridion Laxa, chair of the festival's rules panel. Main beneficiaries are industry organizations, as well as Malacañang's welfare fund.

Laxa is optimistic that this year's festival can reach the P500-million target set by Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority, which spearheads the yearly film fest.

"Last year, we posted P451 million," Laxa noted.

"I am confident we will reach P500 million in box-office receipts this year," said Camaligan.

70th Christmas for tree that survived ...

From page A1

year for 70 years."

Though he considers himself Buddhist, Iwatake was raised in a Christian tradition. He still keeps a photo of the tiny wooden church on Maui where he and his five brothers went to services and Sunday school.

Christmas was always a special time.

His father worked at a merchandise store, and Iwatake remembers the day he came home with a tree. It was nothing all that special, just metal-and-plastic, the kind of decoration that can easily be placed on a table, or in a corner somewhere. He got a string of lights, too, the kind with the big bulbs.

Soon after, his father died in a fishing accident. His body was never found.

Iwatake's mother had relatives in Japan, and took Iwatake's younger brothers there. Iwatake stayed behind to graduate from high school, then, in 1941, six months before Pearl Harbor, he moved to Japan as well.

"Things were pretty bad," he said. "There were war clouds hanging everywhere."

The United States and Britain were the enemy, and Japan clamped down on overt displays of anything Western, including Christianity. Though they had grown up speaking English, Iwatake and his brothers communicated solely in Japanese, and did their best to hide their past.

Something from the heart

But their mother refused to give up on the tree.

"She was in charge and she wanted to put it up," Iwatake said. "During the war years, we had to do that in secret because in wartime Japan it was not welcome. We could have been arrested."

To keep the neighbors from asking questions, his mother found a place for it in the back of their house, on the second floor, away from the windows.

"We were afraid they would report it to the police, or become suspicious about why we were harboring Western things," Iwatake said. "But we were brought up in the American way of life. It is something that you cannot forget. It really is something from the heart."

The year after that first Christmas in Hiroshima, Iwatake went to Tokyo to study economics at a university. At Christmas, he directed a school play, a nativity story, again keeping it secret so that the authorities wouldn't get involved.

Encounter with Bush

Then, in 1943, he was drafted and sent to Chichijima.



WARREN Nobuaki Iwatake and his wife Emiko put the final touches on a Christmas tree, which survived the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan, in their house in Tokyo. AP

Chichijima is a tiny island that virtually no one has heard of. To get there, you go out to the middle of nowhere, and turn south.

In 1944, Iwatake boarded a transport ship from Yokohama to assume his duties at a radio monitoring post on the remote crag. The ship was torpedoed and sunk by an American submarine, but he survived and was put on an oil tanker.

On the island, Iwatake's English skills were put to use listening in on US military communications and keeping watch over a handful of captured American pilots whose planes had been shot down on their way to and from bombing raids on Tokyo.

One day, he was in the hills digging bunkers when he heard that a plane had just been shot down. He saw a lone pilot on a bright yellow life raft paddling furiously away from the island. American planes provided cover, and the submarine USS Finback surfaced and collected him.

The aviator was 20-year-old George H. W. Bush, who would later become the American president. Iwatake met him years later and went back with him to the island. Signed photos of the two, smiling, are placed prominently about Iwatake's apartment.

Deeper impression

But another American left a deeper impression on Iwatake's life.

Captured POWs were forced to monitor US radio traffic. One of them was Warren Vaughn, a Texan.

"One night after a bath, we were walking back and I fell into a bomb pit," Iwatake said. "It was pitch black and I couldn't get out. He reached to me and said to take his hand. He pulled me out."

Vaughn was monitoring the day Iwo Jima fell. Japan's defeat was virtually assured. Soon

after, several naval officers called Vaughn and took him to the beach. "He turned before he left and gave me a sad look," Iwatake said.

For no apparent reason, Vaughn was beheaded, and his body dumped into the sea.

The atrocities committed against the POWs—which included acts of cannibalism—remained largely a secret for the next 50 years. But Iwatake said he did not want Vaughn's memory to die.

"I thought the best way of remembering him was to adopt his first name," Iwatake said.

Hiroshima was worse

Japan surrendered in August 1945, and Iwatake returned home in December.

"I used to think of those joyous days in Hawaii at Christmas, when we had food and treats," he said. "On Chichijima, we were starving."

But Hiroshima was even worse. "Everything was bad, nothing was left," he said. "I couldn't even think of the joys of what I experienced in Hawaii."

Iwatake's younger brother Takashi had been in the center of the city attending school. His body, like their father's, was never found.

The Iwatake home was in the eastern part of the city, behind a small hill that provided a buffer from the nuclear blast. The front end was crushed and burned, but the back stood largely intact.

And that was where the tree was. "Japan had surrendered, there was no food, nothing to celebrate," he said. "Everybody was in shock and a sad state, but we put it up. My mother put it up."

More meaningful again

After the war, Iwatake became an interpreter for the US government and moved to Tokyo.

From 1950, he took responsibility for the family tree. At first, putting it up was more of a simple tradition than anything else.

His family was once again spreading out. At one stage, four brothers worked for the Occupation Forces as interpreters and translators, including Iwatake. He eventually went back to Tokyo, while his brothers returned to Hawaii. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, three brothers volunteered, and one served in Korea.

The Iwatake family remains scattered.

One brother lives in Chicago, another on Maui. Another died of cancer, possibly the result of radiation from the atomic bomb.

But each year, the tree has gone up. For those not in Tokyo to see it, including Vaughn's cousins in Childress, Texas, Iwatake, now 84, sends photos. And each year, it becomes more poignant.

"Gradually, Christmas has become more meaningful again," he said. "Peace, good will toward your fellow man, you know? After the war, there was no such thing." AP

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On the phone, Jalosjos' son Frederick said the "whole family" would spend Christmas with him in jail.

Asked what was on the noche buena menu, Frederick said the family had not prepared any special food and would just buy "fresh fruits and Christmas ham."

"He definitely likes lots of fruits," Frederick said of his father. "What's important is that we're with him through everything."

Jalosjos' mother Angelina, 85 (not 80, as earlier reported), said there was no reason to celebrate Christmas while her son was in jail.

"We were expecting a white Christmas because my son Nonong is here," she said. "We didn't prepare anything. Why should we [make preparations] when a member of the family is again incarcerated?"

Jalosjos left the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa City on Saturday afternoon, got on a private plane, and flew to his native Dapitan.

He was expecting to spend Christmas with his family there, until he was rearrested on Sunday.

"I hope this won't be bleak. I am hoping my lawyers can do something so I can spend Christmas with my mother, brothers, and other members of the family," the rape convict told the INQUIRER on Sunday morning.

Animal massacre

In Dapitan, Councilor Apple Angolong said the Jalosjoses had prepared something "grand" for the Christmas Eve repast.

"The family was planning to slaughter hundreds of pigs and cows," she said, adding that with Jalosjos' resumed incarceration, the plan did not materialize.

"Akala namin magkakaroon ng massacre ng mga hayop, hindi pala matutuloy," Angolong said. "Until now, we are all waiting for news. We are still hoping he will return and celebrate Christmas with us."

Jalosjos, who was convicted of raping an 11-year-old girl, had flown home insisting that he was a free man by virtue of

the Dec. 16 release order that, he said, had not been revoked.

But Gonzalez had said no release order was officially handed down, and that the Department of Justice was still computing Jalosjos' release date based on President Macapagal-Arroyo's commutation of his sentence, plus time credits given to him for good behavior.

Justice Undersecretary Fidel Exconde also said on Sunday that even if a release order was handed down, it would have been considered revoked as of Dec. 19 pursuant to a memorandum issued by Gonzalez.

In that memorandum, it was stated that any such release order was considered revoked because the DOJ was still studying the date of Jalosjos' actual release.

'All for show'

There are no plans yet to bring Jalosjos back to the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa where he was sent to serve two life terms.

"We are still assessing the security situation. It's all being studied," Gonzalez said.

But Rep. Liza Maza of the militant women's party Gabriela said Jalosjos' apparent escape could have been part of a Malacañang ploy to transfer him to a facility closer to his home in Zamboanga del Norte while the government devised ways to temper public outrage over the commutation of his sentence.

"It's all for a show (*Palabas lang*)," the lawmaker told the INQUIRER on the phone. "It's all about providing convenience for Jalosjos."

Maza said the matter was a repeat of the same special treatment accorded to Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, the US Marine convicted of raping a Filipino woman last year.

The Philippine government plucked Smith out of the Makati City jail and handed him over to the US Embassy even if the venue of his detention had yet to be determined. *With reports from Julie S. Alipala, Nico Alconaba and Richel V. Umel, Inquirer Mindanao; Christian V. Esguerra and Norman Bordadora in Manila*

Prolific 11-year-old painter shares earnings with sick

From page A1

hood in Tondo, Manila.

Since she picked up the brush in October 2006, Nice has painted 200 works, from scenery to abstract, and has done four exhibits in different venues in Manila. She has been giving away the proceeds ever since.

Not surprisingly, the abstract paintings of Nice, who was born to Christian parents, reads the Bible at night, and regularly attends Sunday service, were mostly about God and the Christian faith.

Her mother, who along with Nice asked not to be fully identified because the family wants to keep a low profile, says her daughter's encounter with the sick has inspired her to paint more so she could help raise money for the costly treatment of cancer patients.

"She learned that a lot of people are dying from leukemia due to lack of money. That's why she decided to do exhibits so she can give away the pro-

ceeds to the patients," she says.

Nice, who's enrolled at the Holy Heart Christian Academy in Manila, discovered her talent in the unlikely place: a hospital.

While confined at the Dr. Fe del Mundo Hospital in Quezon City for systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) in October last year, she copiously drew flowers and fruits on a sketch pad to entertain herself and the hospital staff.

She gave her first drawing of a flower with the message "Don't ever give up" to a young leukemic patient (who died days later), and posted the rest on the wall.

'It all started with lupus'

If a person has lupus, the immune system attacks healthy cells and tissues. This can damage joints, skin, blood vessels and organs. The most common type of lupus is SLE, according to studies.

Seeing her growing interest in sketching, her parents next bought her a canvas and painting materials, and were amazed when she began mixing colors,

and started to paint.

Her parents believed this was a "gift."

"It all started with lupus," says the mother, 33, a full-time secretary at the church. "And we believe that lupus is just one purpose to see the greater purpose beyond. If not for lupus, we would not discover that she could paint."

Nice's mother says her husband enrolled their daughter in a sketching class of artist Fernando Cena during the summer break when she was 7, but she did not attend the sessions regularly and did not produce anything then—and for the next three years.

While she went back to Cena's class after she started to paint, she never had formal schooling in abstract, she adds.

Inspired by Jesus

Nice would continue to paint in her next eight confinements at the same hospital between October 2006 and February this year, producing 50 paintings for

her first exhibit.

"I was inspired by Jesus. I just paint what came to mind," Nice, says when asked how she learned how to paint abstract.

"She drew and painted to keep the pain away. The more her joints in the hands hurt (one of the symptoms), the more she painted," her mother says. "It's the faith in her heart that keeps her moving on."

In her first exhibit at their church in Tondo in May, she sold some P140,000 worth of paintings, an amount she divided among eight cancer patients, all members of their church.

Among those sold was an abstract of "The Mother and Child," which fetched P35,000.

After her exhibit, she was never admitted to the hospital again, but she continued to get a checkup and take her daily dose of medicines. She resumed her painting at night in their home in Sampaloc, Manila.

"That was one amazing thing that happened after her first ex-

hibit," her mother says.

A blessing to others

"When she saw the purpose why she was stricken with lupus, that she has to paint to be a blessing to others, she wasn't confined anymore. She saw herself as the Lord's instrument to serve others," she adds.

In her second exhibit of another 50 paintings at the Dr. Fe del Mundo Hospital in August, she sold P40,000 worth of paintings, the bulk of which went to their church and the Leukemic Indigents Fund Endowment (LIFE), an NGO that supports leukemia patients.

She kept the rest to pay for her expenses on painting materials.

Nice followed this up with a third exhibit of another batch of 50 paintings in September at the 700 Club Asia in Makati City, where she earned more than P15,000 from the sales.

Painting a life's story

The proceeds were divided among the 700 Club, their

church, and Nice.

"It's not the painting that counts here, it's the painter. It's her life's story. They buy her painting because they're touched by her. She's sick and yet she's trying to help others," her mother says.

Some of the buyers were bank and company executives, lawyers, and even a justice.

Her mother says the family always supports whatever she decides to do with her paintings, and that it helps that other groups are ready to tie up with her in all her exhibits.

On Saturday, Nice threw a party for over 200 children from three poor areas in Tondo at their church compound, and gave away gifts which she bought with the P8,000 earnings from her fourth exhibit in Pasig City last week, and which she solicited from church members.

"When Christmas comes, they're the least happy," she says.

Nice says she just wants to bring joy to the poor. And that's how nice she is.

Broadcaster murdered

From page A1

in the country this year. He was the 54th media member to be murdered under the Arroyo administration, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP).

Two other radiomen on the car with Lintuan were unhurt, including one who said he survived by playing dead.

"He was the only target," Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles, a friend of the murdered broadcaster, told the INQUIRER.

Nograles, of the ruling Lakas-CMD, said Lintuan "could (have been killed by the) Davao Death Squad and the usual suspects." He refused to identify the "usual suspects." The so-called death squad is a vigilante group.

Raul Antopuesto, manager of dxGO, which is owned and operated by Manila Broadcasting Co., said the attack on Lintuan was "definitely job-related."

He said that in the past week, Lintuan had been taking shots at the recently opened "People's Park," a project of the city government.

'A crocodile park'

"He called it corrupt or the crocodile park," Antopuesto said, quoting what Lintuan had said in his radio commentaries.

Antopuesto said Lintuan, in his program yesterday, discussed issues like the ban on aerial spraying on banana plantations in the city and the People's Park.

Lintuan claimed the trees planted in the park were overpriced.

One of Lintuan's companions, Edgar Banzon, said he heard two gunshots. He said they were on an intersection on their way to the main highway when the killing happened.

The other companion, Lucio Ceniza, said he feigned being

shot while the assailant was firing at their vehicle.

"Had I not pretended that I was also hit, maybe the gunman would also have shot me," Ceniza said.

"This government will not allow this criminal act to go unpunished," Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza said.

Lintuan's 4 children

Dureza said he was coordinating with Davao media groups to provide assistance to the family of Lintuan, a widower taking care of four school-aged children.

Dureza said Lintuan was also a "survivor" many years ago of a communist rebel attack on a radio station that killed six people.

Senior Supt. Jaime Morente, city police chief, said "Task Force Batman" had been created to track down the killer.

Rommel Rebollido, a member of the NUJP national directorate, said it was very disheartening that the murder took place a day before Christmas when the victim was supposed to celebrate it with his four children.

'Batman is dead'

Nograles said Lintuan "was a very close friend since 1984 and I think he was really perceived as identified with me."

Minutes after Lintuan was killed, Nograles was sending out text messages to reporters in Metro Manila, saying: "Batman was ambushed with two other media men He is dead on the spot."

Nograles would not name his "usual suspects."

"Too early to tell who did it. Let's just pressure local and national intelligence groups and law agencies to come up with their theories fast," he said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the Philippine Na-

tional Police to "immediately bring the perpetrators to justice."

The NUJP Davao chapter said killing of Lintuan "only shows how barbaric this society has become and how dangerous it is for members of the Fourth Estate to do their duties in this part of the globe."

"This is doubly sorrowful for the media community here considering that Batman was murdered on the eve of Christmas Day that while other people are celebrating the Nativity. His family will lose its only breadwinner as he already lost his wife to cancer a few years ago."

The NUJP Davao paid tribute to Lintuan as a broadcaster "known for his stinging commentaries against erring politicians, backing this up with good research and evidence."

The National Press Club (NPC) urged law enforcement agencies "not to be cowed by whoever are behind these most despicable acts and to get to the bottom of these murders."

Death roll

Other media members killed this year were:

- Vicente Sumalpong, a senior reporter for Radyo ng Bayan, gunned down in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, on June 25.
- Hernani Pastolero, editor of the Lightning Courier, shot dead in front of his house in Shariff Kabunsuan on Feb. 19.
- Carmelo Palacios, reporter of Radyo ng Bayan, found dead in Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija, on April 18.
- Dodie Nuñez, a contributor to publication Katapat Cavite, killed on May 21 in Cavite. With reports from Joselle Badilla and Aquiles Zonio, *Inquirer* Mindanao; Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila, and Kate Pedrosa, *Inquirer* Research

81-year-old queen joins YouTube gen

From page A1

Palace, watching a black and white footage of herself delivering her first televised broadcast.

The queen, in an apricot colored dress, is seen walking into the palace's opulent 1844 Room, which is filled with lights and production equipment, and preparing to start her address.

The footage of the queen's 1957 Christmas TV broadcast, posted on YouTube on Sunday, reminds viewers that TV was once as groundbreaking a creation as the Internet is today.

"I very much hope that this new medium will make my Christmas message more personal and direct," the queen said of television in the 1957 broadcast. "That it is possible for some of you to see me today is just another example of the speed at which things are changing all around us."

In her Christmas message this year, the queen will urge everyone to care for the vulnerable and those excluded from society in her annual Christmas Day message, Buckingham Palace officials said in a statement.

But the entirety of Tuesday's festive speech, which was produced this year by British Broadcasting Corp., will remain confidential until it is aired, both on TV and radio, on Christmas Day at 1500 GMT (11 p.m. in Manila).



QUEEN Elizabeth II delivers her Christmas Day message for broadcast on television and the Internet at Buckingham Palace in London. AP

The queen chooses a different theme for each annual address, the one occasion in the year when she writes her own speech without government advice. In last year's address, she called for mutual respect between young and old and greater religious tolerance.

The queen delivered her first Christmas message on the radio in 1952, a month after her coronation.

The Royal Channel

The royal YouTube page—which bears the scarlet lettered heading "The Royal Channel—The Official Channel of the British Monarchy"—is illustrated with a photograph of Buckingham Palace flanked by the queen's guards in their tall bearskin hats and red tunics.

Its modern video clips show shots of garden parties, state visits, the queen, the many British prime ministers who have served during her reign and a day in the life of her son, Prince Charles.

The Royal Channel also shows excerpts from Lord

Wakehurst's film "Long to Reign Over Us," which has never been publicly released. Wakehurst, a member of Parliament who died in 1970, was an avid amateur filmmaker, charting events such as Queen Elizabeth II's accession and coronation.

The color images convey the historical events from the public's perspective, showing crowds holding street parties and camping out on The Mall—the wide boulevard outside Buckingham Palace—to catch a glimpse of the queen on Coronation Day.

The Royal Channel also includes rarely seen silent news footage of the 1923 wedding of the queen's parents, then known as the Duke of York and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

On Tuesday, Queen Elizabeth II's annual Christmas speech can once again be downloaded as a podcast from www.royal.gov.uk. It also is being made available on television in high definition for the first time. AP

Health experts warn revelers on deadly cholesterol

From page A1

University at Ithaca, New York, told the INQUIRER.

"If Filipinos decided to eat plant-based diets and seriously rejected fast-food chains, they would gain much stature, more health, and be much richer and independent in the future," he said.

Forty years ago, Campbell was a researcher for a project in the Philippines involving malnourished children.

The primary goal of the project was to ensure that the children were getting as much protein as possible. But the project became an investigation for Campbell, who "uncovered a dark secret"—that "children who ate the highest protein diets were the ones most likely to get liver cancer," a predominantly adult disease.

Ironically, Campbell was raised in a dairy farm, milking cows and believing in the value of the typical high-fat, animal-protein-based American diet.

Growth of tumors

According to the bestseller "The China Study: Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss and Long-Term Health," Campbell began to review other reports from around the world that reflected the findings of his research in the Philippines.

The China Study project culminated in a 20-year partnership among Cornell University, Oxford University, and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, and a survey of diseases and lifestyle factors in rural China and Taiwan.

The study examined more than 350 variables of health and nutrition, with surveys from 6,500 adults in more than 2,500 counties across China and Taiwan, and conclusively demonstrated the link between nutrition and heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

The book cites research data showing that animal protein promotes the growth of tumors.

"Animal protein increases the levels of a hormone, IGF-1, which is a risk factor for cancer, and high casein (the main protein of cow's milk) diets allow more carcinogens into cells, which allow more dangerous carcinogen products to bind to

VEGGIE RESTOS

IF GOING ENTIRELY VEGETARIAN SOUNDS too drastic for lifelong meat-lovers, there are so-called "transition" foods.

Tofu sisig, crackling wheat *chicharon*, mock beef and broccoli, even mock *rellenong bangus*, are specialties of Greens (Scout Castor near Tomas Morato, Quezon City). Blissful Belly (77 Xavierville Ave., Quezon City) has tofu sisig, mock *afritada*, barbecue and *kare-kare*.

Evergreen and Bodhi (both found in mall food courts) serve mock *bopis*, barbecue, beef steak, curry and *lechon paksiw*. (A stand-alone store is found on Del Monte Avenue and Banawe Street, Quezon City.)

Also check out Daily Veggies and Café (540 Banawe and Calamba Streets).

Varona Vegetarian Health Foods (Leveriza Street, Pasay City) is a store that also supplies nutritionally oriented hospitals.

In the provinces, the vegetarian restaur-

ants are Azotea Greens, Bliss Café and Oh My Gulay (all in Baguio City); Ima's Gulay Bar and Vegetarian House (Puerto Princesa City, Palawan); Mandala Spa's Veggie (Boracay Island, Aklan); Ro-Dhel Vegetarian (Bajak-Bajak, Olongapo City); and Vita Crazia Vegetarian Grocery (Sta. Rosa, Laguna).

Visit www.happycow.net/asia/philippines/ for a nationwide list of restaurants. Those seriously going vegetarian may visit www.Veg-Cooking.com or GoVeg.com.

Dr. Omar Arabia reminds those checking out transition foods that pure greens and veggies are still the ultimate goals for vegetarians.

If Albert Einstein were alive today, he would agree.

"Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet," Einstein once said. Tessa R. Salazar

DNA, which allow more mutagenic reactions that give rise to cancer cells, which allow more rapid growth of tumors once they are initially formed," it says.

It points out that autoimmune diseases, bone and kidney health, vision and brain disorders in old age, such as cognitive dysfunction and Alzheimer's, are influenced by diet.

It stresses that genes by themselves do not determine the onset of disease. Rather, they are activated, or expressed, and nutrition plays a critical role in determining which genes, good and bad, are activated.

Do as he says

John Robbins, author of "The Food Revolution" and son of one of the founders of the Baskin-Robbins ice cream empire, chose to turn his back on the business and the immense wealth it represented.

In "The Food Revolution," Robbins wrote of the annual medical costs in the United States directly attributable to meat consumption—between \$60 billion and \$120 billion.

He now asks Filipinos to do what Campbell is encouraging them to do.

In an e-mailed reply to questions posted via yesworld.org (Youth for Environmental Sanity, an organization cofounded by his son Ocean), Robbins

said: "Although the US spends more money by far on healthcare than any other nation, we are 46th in the world in infant mortality, just to give one example.

"And our levels of obesity are skyrocketing. This is because the fast-food insanity has largely taken over the country. I dearly hope the Philippine people treasure their traditions, and do not fall in the trap set by the American fast-food companies."

'Meat-sweet' diet

A recent study conducted in Shanghai links Western diets to breast cancer among postmenopausal women, according to Marilyn Tseng, associate member of the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia.

In an e-mail interview, Tseng said the study group examined over 1,550 women aged 25 to 64 years who had been diagnosed with breast cancer between 1996 and 1998.

The women provided personal information on their diets, lifestyles and reproductive factors.

Two patterns emerged—a "vegetable-soy" diet (including tofu, cauliflower, beans, bean sprouts and green leafy vegetables) and a "meat-sweet" diet (shrimp, chicken, beef, pork, candy and desserts).

In adjusted unconditional logistic regression analyses, the

cancer risk was not associated with the "vegetable-soy" pattern, but was associated with the "meat-sweet" pattern.

Still inconclusive

But experts said it still had to be proven that a no-meat diet was the best preventive measure against cancer.

David Sampson, director of Medical & Scientific Communications, National Home Office, American Cancer Society, described vegetarian diets as "includ[ing] many health-promoting features" and "tend[ing] to be low in saturated fats and high in fiber, vitamins and phytochemicals."

"It is not possible to conclude at this time, however, that a vegetarian diet has any special benefits for the prevention of cancer," he said.

Dr. Lawrence J. Cheskin, a fellow of the American College of Physicians, director of the Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center, and associate professor of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, agreed that for certain cancers and other ailments like heart disease, a plant-based diet devoid of animal protein would be "useful."

"[But] I do not think total avoidance is necessary to obtain a benefit," he said.

Dee Sandquist, director of Nutrition, Diabetes, Weight Management and Wound Healing of the Southwest Washing-

ton Medical Center, told the INQUIRER: "Animal protein can be included in the diet in moderation as part of an overall balanced approach to healthy eating and increasing physical activity. Cancer is a complex disease with many causes. It is difficult to isolate animal protein as a cancer cause."

Still, the Philippines' Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, a former health secretary and longtime vegetarian, urges patients to "go veggie" to help reverse their diseases. (He also swims one kilometer a day on weekdays and two km a day on weekends.)

Dr. Omar Arabia, a medical doctor "of last resort" who practices integrative medicine, cites several studies that point to animal meat's deadly putrefaction in the human body's digestive system.

But he said there was no shortcut or "magic bullet" to treat diseases.

Major risk factors

Nevertheless, Dr. Samuel Epstein, toxicologist and professor of occupational and environmental medicine at the University of Illinois School of Public Health, said in his 1998 book, "The Breast Cancer Prevention Program," that a diet high in calorie and animal fat represented two major risk factors for breast cancer—obesity and exposure to carcinogenic and estrogenic industrial chemicals in animal fat.

A low-calorie, low-animal-fat diet rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants offers the best protection against these diet-related risks, he said.

Dr. Dean Ornish of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute in California, whom the INQUIRER contacted via e-mail through Web.Editors@newsweek.com, granted permission to quote him from "Program for Reversing Heart Disease."

He said that for those who already had coronary heart disease, there was such a thing as a "reversal" diet consisting only of vegetarian sources. (But he also said there were still many types of food one could choose from.)

The reversal diet lists a number of restrictions for people

with heart problems, including avoiding all cooking oils and all animal products except nonfat milk and yogurt; caffeine and other stimulants; MSG; and foods high in saturated fat.

It allows moderate intakes of salt and sugar, and tolerates moderate alcohol consumption (less than two ounces a day).

Below WHO standards

According to Fely Velandria, supervising science research specialist of the Philippines' Food and Nutrition Research Institute, the Filipino menu lands squarely below the World Health Organization's recommended daily dietary allowance for fruits and vegetables—400 grams of vegetables and fruits per person per day (or two cups of raw vegetable salad or one cup of cooked vegetable per day, and three servings of fruits).

The typical daily Filipino consumption of vegetables and fruits is just 111 g and 54 g, respectively, for a total of 165 g, Velandria said.

Her advice to vegetarians: Eat a variety of foods because there is no single vegetable that contains all the nutrients that the body needs.

Animal-based food is still a good source of iron and protein and other vitamins, specifically for children who need to absorb higher amounts of these nutrients.

'Malunggay'

Added Velandria: "The protein value of beans is the same as meat, chicken and other animal sources. In place of meat, good sources of iron are legumes and dried beans. Vegetarians should fortify their 'vege-meats' (vegetable proteins textured like meat) with iron."

"The lowly *malunggay's* protein content is two times more than that of milk, its Vitamin A four times more than in carrots, its calcium four times more than milk, and its potassium three times more than in bananas.

"*Malunggay* has minerals and amino acids. It is the most nutritious plant in the world, as cited by the Asian Vegetable Research Development Center based in Taiwan."

NO ROOM AT THE INN

Peace talks spark tourism boom in Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM, WEST BANK—HOTELS booked, parties planned and lights glittering, Bethlehem is preparing for tens of thousands of pilgrims to overcome Israeli occupation and give the town the best Christmas in years.

"We are hopeful this city will remain peaceful. I'm sure we'll have a wonderful Christmas," says Mayor Victor Batarseh, who is determined to look on the bright side sitting next to a plastic fir tree near Manger Square.

Tourism has grown 60 percent, and Batarseh expects 30,000-40,000 tourists—double the number last year—to visit the town where the Bible says Jesus was born in a stable after Mary and Joseph found no room at the inn.

Hotel occupancy has risen from 10-15 percent to 45 percent in the run-up to the season. Batarseh thinks the 2,000 beds in town will be fully booked this

Christmas, reversing a long slump stemming from Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Katherine Korsak, a 36-year-old Roman Catholic from Poland admits she was initially scared about coming to Bethlehem, crossing through the towering cement wall separating Israel from the West Bank and passing military security.

They came with joy

"But this is such an important place for us. We came with joy. Christmas is so close and for us it's a spiritual experience here," Korsak says, showing the postcards and wooden carvings she bought from vendors.

On Nov. 27, Israel and the Palestinians formally resumed peace talks more than seven years after they collapsed into a deadly cycle of violence that has killed 6,000 people, sent economies into free fall and hiked emigration.

But the peace talks and falling levels of violence are once again attracting tourists en masse.

"I'm very optimistic. We already see the results," says 27-year-old sales and marketing manager Haya Saad, sipping tea in the Bethlehem Intercontinental, the only five-star hotel in town. Its 250 rooms are fully booked.

The Intercontinental has doubled room rates this Christmas, capitalizing on booming demand. The hotel also features a fiesta of Christmas carols, Oriental music, parties in the bar with DJs and alcohol every night from Christmas Eve to New Year's Eve.

Other side of Bethlehem

But peel away the tinsel and walk in the back streets avoided by the pilgrims based in and out to the Church of Nativity and the misery is stark.

Israel's separation barrier has confiscated farm land, uprooted olive trees, isolated Bethlehem from Jerusalem and helped to quicken emigration and keep unemployment at more than 50 percent. Israeli raids are still frequent.

One Bethlehem olive wood workshop is modelling Nativity scenes complete with a replica separation barrier blocking the wise men from getting to the stable.

"I hadn't understood to what extent land was taken and freedom of movement curtailed. They are literally imprisoned. It's a horrible thing to see a community absolutely destroyed," said charity director Gareth Hewitt.

Even so, Israel says 2.3 million tourists are expected this year, close to the bumper year 2000—when Pope John Paul II visited and Israel and the Palestinians came close to an agreement at Camp David.



ISRAELI Arab Christians and foreigners gather in Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus Christ as

Big league refrigeration

10 cu. ft.
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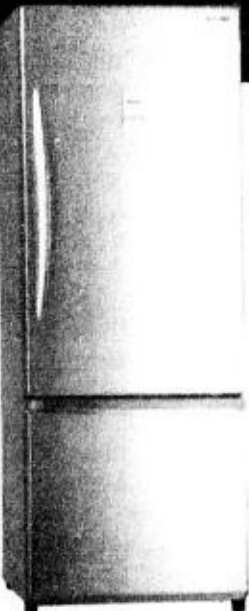
Panasonic recently introduced the newest household companion in all kinds of storage and freezing needs—the all-new Panasonic 10 cu. ft. freezer—that provides an efficient cooling system and a larger storage space.

With the help of All Roll-bond 7-level Evaporator Shelves, cooling becomes a breeze set themselves on a breeze. And with its quick freezing capability, Panasonic's 10 cu. ft. freezer can chill over 100 ice bags a day, stepping several notches up on the immense chilling operations.

Also available in 6 and 8 cubic ft. sizes, the all-new Panasonic freezing and storage innovation boasts of upper limit, hassle-free convenience.



A refrigerator is always on, so it uses more electricity than any other household appliance. But there's no need to worry with a smart inverter refrigerator. It varies power to suit the situation—more power in the day when it's often opened and closed, and less at night when it's hardly ever used.

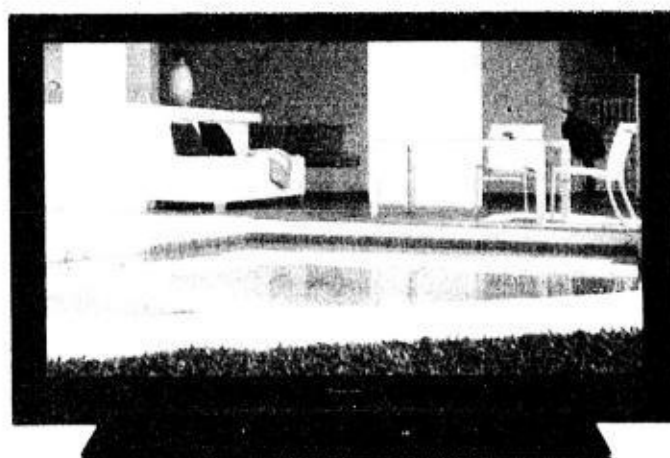


Panasonic ideas for life

Panasonic ideas for life

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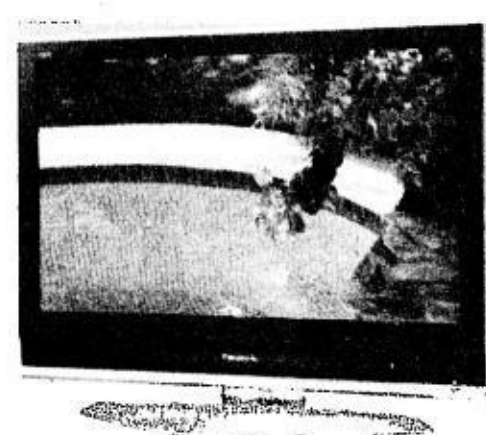
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'Come to Jerusalem, see the Messiah'



at the Nativity scene during a reenactment of the journey to part of Christmas festivities at the village of Nazareth in Israel. AP

JERUSALEM—AS CHRISTMAS approaches, Christians around the world turn to thoughts of the Holy Land and the great figures in the Bible.

For some who come on a visit, the religious energy is enough to make them recite scriptures on the street or claim to be King David or Jesus.

The phenomenon is known as the Jerusalem Syndrome, although psychiatrists disagree whether it can affect otherwise healthy people or causes only those predisposed to psychoses to believe they have seen the Messiah.

The police set up a unit in the city—sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians—to deal with the minority of tourists each year who believe they are characters from the Bible, and hospitals have special wards to treat wayward travellers.

During a walking tour of Jerusalem's Old City in 2003, tour

operator Avi Green said a 19-year-old American participant saw the stones of the Western Wall, one of Judaism's holiest sites, open up and reveal the Messiah.

"He had a vision that the stones of the wall opened and the Messiah appeared and spoke to him," Green said. "He became delusional and violent and had to be hospitalized."

Between 30 and 40 tourists each year are admitted to hospital for similar behavior, according to Dr. Gregory Katz, head of the emergency unit at Givat Shaul Mental Health Center. Of those, only a few are diagnosed with "true" Jerusalem Syndrome.

"It's extremely rare. It's only Jerusalem Syndrome if the person has had no prior psychiatric problems," Katz said. "It usually occurs on their first trip to the Holy Land. They see a meeting of the real Jerusalem

and the Jerusalem from the Bible."

Most patients are middle-aged with strong religious foundations, hailing from small towns in the United States or Scandinavia, Katz said. They are usually on organized tours with religious groups and develop a feeling of ecstasy when they see holy places mentioned in the Bible.

"Add jet lag and not sleeping for a few nights, and they begin to identify with biblical characters," Katz said. "You might see them dressed in white and preaching at holy sites. Such behavior can be dangerous."

Katz described the syndrome's progression in an article published in the British Journal of Psychiatry in 2000. It starts with agitation and an urge to visit the city alone and ends with the need to don a toga and deliver a sermon at a holy place.

He described a 35-year-old

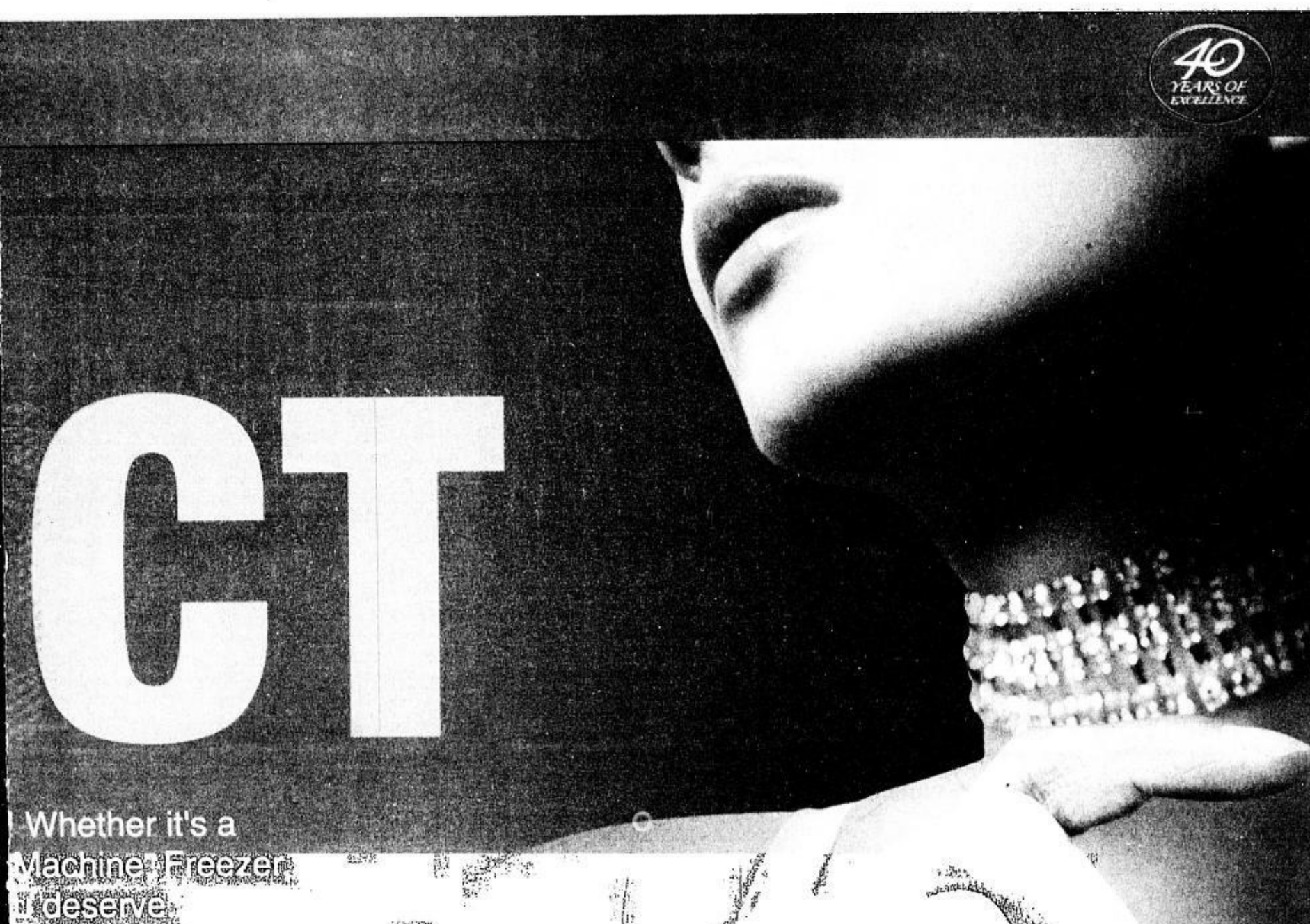
woman from a Christian tour group who, after three or four days without sleep, believed she was the Virgin Mary. The woman walked out of her hotel room dressed in a white sheet and began preaching about not committing sins.

The episode lasts a few days, after which the person usually does not remember what happened, Katz said.

In 1986, Victor Wadhawkar helped form the Israeli police tourism unit to deal with foreign travellers. Whenever there was a report of a ranting tourist, his team was sent.

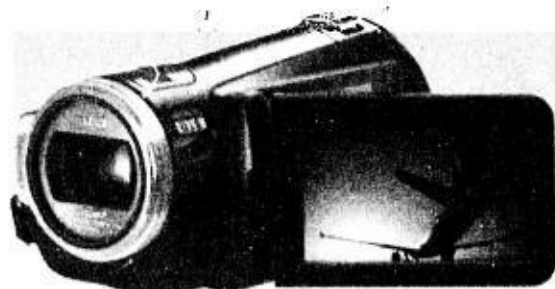
"We dealt with about a dozen delusional tourists a year ... with a spike during Christmas and Passover holidays when more tourists walk around and visit holy places," said Wadhawkar, who retired after working 14 years in the unit.

Reuters



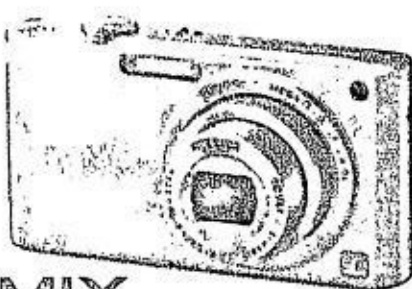
CT

Whether it's a
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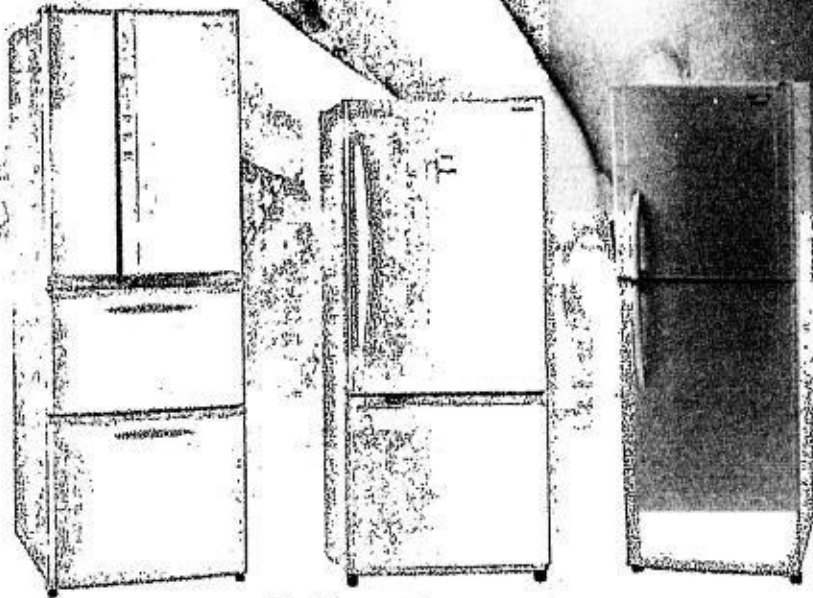
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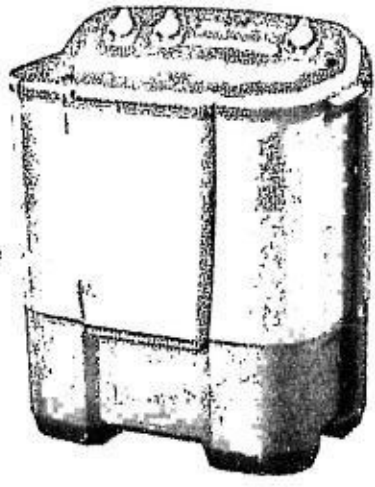
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• Color: Silver

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• Dolphin Drive Pulsator
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COMPACT SIZE

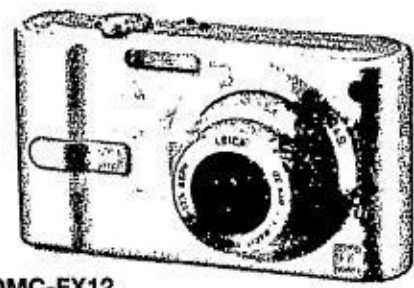
Panasonic's Lumix cameras are one of the most popular cameras in the world, owing to the amazing technology behind its lens. Lumix DMC-FX10 and DMC-FX12 have an Intelligent Image Stabilization system that provides easier control for handshake movements, preventing motion blur to capture striking pictures.

The twin marvel also enhances convenience and usability with the new Quick Setting function that lets you easily access and set the functions used most often. The DMC-FX10 comes in silver, blue, and pink, and the DMC-FX12 is available in silver and black.



DMC-FX10

Colors: -S (Silver), -A (Blue), -P (Pink)



DMC-FX12

Colors: -S (Silver), -K (Black)



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OPINION

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Spirit of peace

ON DEC. 24, 1914, ALL WAS QUIET ON THE WESTERN Front of World War I when suddenly, in one sector, happy voices called out from both friendly and enemy trenches. The soldiers on both sides then began singing Christmas carols. Next, officers shouted requests not to fire, and soon, British and German soldiers gathered in no-man's land, exchanging gifts, sharing their food, laughing and joking with one another. The fraternization spread like wildfire.

Some of the happenings have taken on the aspect of myth, but most of them were true: at least for one day in the horrendous war, soldiers stopped shooting at one another, met as friends and treated one another as human beings. Writer Simon Rees, writing about this incident, said, "The event was seen as a shining episode of sanity in the bloody history of World War I."

Christmas is traditionally a time for calling a truce in wars and other armed conflicts, especially in Christian countries. In the Philippines, the government has declared a Christmas truce in its war with the New People's Army. But in about 40 or nearly one-fifth of the countries of the world, wars and other conflicts continue, Christmas or no Christmas.

During World War I, civilians made up fewer than 5 percent of all the casualties. Today, about 75 percent or more of those killed or wounded in wars are non-combatants. Many of them are women, old people and children—they are the ones who are among the first to suffer in any war.

More than 2,000 years ago, peace reigned in the greater part of the world when the Prince of Peace was born in the little town of Bethlehem. But soon after, wars broke out in many parts of the globe, and many nations have not experienced peace for decades, if not centuries. Would that the spirit that prompted the soldiers on the opposing sides of the Western Front to initiate a truce again animate not just troops but civilians to persuade their political and military leaders to negotiate a permanent peace not just in their countries but throughout the world. In a world weary of almost endless war, the greatest gift would be peace.

Spirit of love

IT IS SAID THAT "THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS IN foxholes." But do atheists and non-Christians also celebrate Christmas, traditionally considered a Christian festival? And is Christmas still considered largely a religious festival?

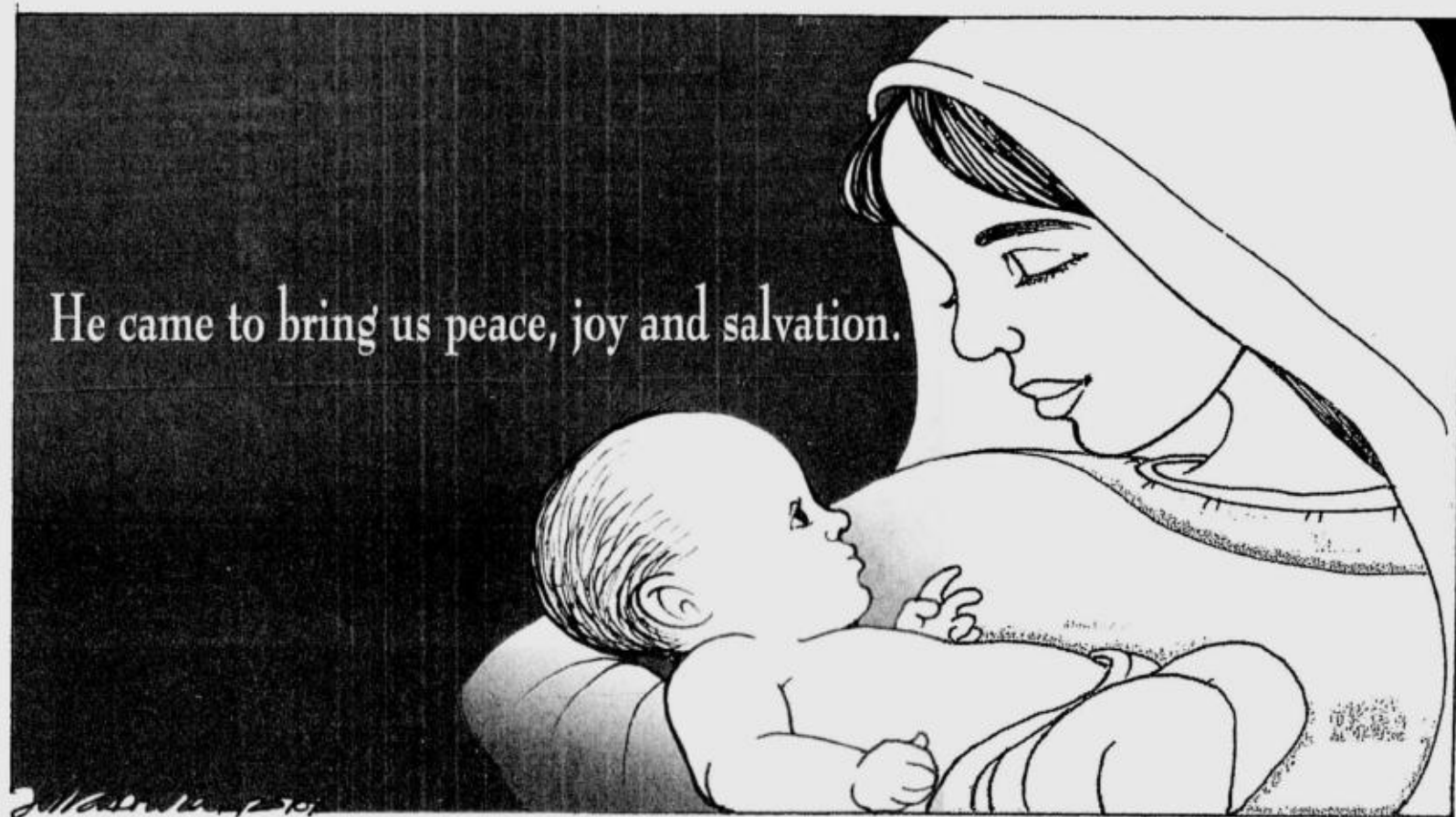
Non-Christians in many parts of the world have indeed appropriated Christmas, with all its trappings—the carols, Santa Claus, wreaths of holly, the Christmas tree, etc. The whole enterprise has become indecently commercialized. Commerce, and not Christ, has become the center of the celebration in many areas.

Richard Dawkins, a British evolutionary biologist at Oxford, wrote in 2006 "The God Delusion," a jeremiad against religious belief. He said that "so divorced has Christmas become from religion that I find no necessity to bother with euphemisms such as happy holiday season." Christmas, he said, "has long ceased to be a religious festival. I participate for family reasons, with a reluctance that owes more to aesthetics than atheistics. I detest 'Jingle Bells,' 'White Christmas,' 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer,' and the obscene spending bonanza that nowadays seems to occupy not just December, but November and much of October, too."

These observations could very well apply to the Philippines, where the celebration of Christmas starts in September—and not for entirely religious but materialistic and commercial reasons. A New York Times article in December 2006 said that Christmas has been "hijacked—so much so that even atheists are now comfortable getting into the spirit."

But in the midst of the increasing commercialization of Christmas, we can take comfort in the fact that in the Philippines it remains a season of love, goodwill and giving and forgiving, of reunions of family and friends.

Wherever we gather and celebrate in a spirit of love and goodwill, we honor and celebrate Christ.



WHO GAGS WHEN SAYING "MERRY CHRISTMAS"? Macbeth rasped that he choked after murdering Duncan, his king. "I had most need of blessing, and Amen / Stuck in my throat."

Does this greeting stick in the craws of Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and some officers when they address Edith Burgos and other mothers of desaparecidos? And tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco? Does he grit his teeth when he mumbles (if ever), "Maligayang Pasko," to small farmers victimized by the coconut levy?

The Marcoses yank ill-gotten wealth, parked with cronies, who've made it their ill-gotten wealth. Do Imelda, Imee and Bongbong choke on the Ilokano "Naimbag a Pascua?" Does pardoned plunderer Joseph Estrada hail ex-cronies Jaime Dichavez, Atong Ang and Dante Tan, in Mandarin, "Sheng Tan Kuwai Lei?"

Remember those 40-plus officials junketing in Spain? When on Madrid's Gran Via, did they text home, "Feliz Navidad"? Does now freed rapist Romeo Jalosjos greet his victim, "Malipayong Pasko"?

Schmaltzy songs, Santa Claus, wrecked diets, etc. don't make Christmas. "The birth of Jesus is not some fairy tale meant to warm the heart. We measure time by this event," Oblate Fr. Ron Rolihieser writes. It's also about "a harsh, non-negotiable challenge to clean up our pampered, self-centered lives and build some justice."

Christmas 2007 comes, as it did two millennia ago, to a "hard as flint" society. "There was oppression for those who were not friends of Tiberius Caesar," noted the 1949 Wall Street Journal editorial, republished on every Christmas Eve since. Looting, abuse, summary executions were rife. "There was everywhere contempt for human life... What was a man for but to serve Caesar?"

Our Caesars, Herods, Scrooges, and praetorian guards today haven't changed. Ask the often double-crossed Sumilao farmers. Then, and now, it's the poor who bear the brunt. The richest 10 percent of Filipinos consume 37 centavos out of

'Hard as flint'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado



every peso, the United Nations' Human Development Report reveals. The poorest 10 percent scrounge with two centavos.

No one dies directly from starvation here. But "protein energy malnutrition ushers a bigger proportion of pre-school kids to early graves than in poorer Bangladesh or Kenya," the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank found. And 463 of every 100,000 Filipinos suffer from TB, almost quadruple the Malaysian rate of 133.

Malnutrition opens floodgates to debilitating diseases, including blindness due to vitamin A deficiency. It spawns a tragic cycle: ill-fed anemic mothers giving birth to shriveled children, who in turn will mother the next generation of dwarfed infants.

A child always crouched below her desk during breaks. So, this Grade 1 teacher checked and found: "She didn't want us to see her eat breakfast—green papaya, soaked in salt and vinegar, wrapped in a plastic bag." This is starvation by daily installment.

You bump into this vulnerable child everywhere. At Christmastime, some emerge as shabbily-clothed carolers. Others muster the "bottle-cap brigade"—grimy kids who, at street corners, whack tansan tambourines to cadge a peso or two.

These gaunt "street troubadours" should be in school. But poverty forces 33 out of every 100 to drop out before reaching Grade 6. And they know, from experience, that this season nets them larger tips.

"Christmas is the only time I know of when men and women seem, by one consent, to open their shut-up hearts freely," Charles Dick-

ens wrote in 1843. But these chronically hungry youngsters can barely read. Thus, few know of Dickens' tale of Christmases past, present and yet to come.

A thin crust of Scrooges, meanwhile, toss up leaders who are equally blind. "You were always a good man of business," Scrooge told the ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley. "Business?" wailed the Christmas Past wraith, shaking his chains. "Mankind was my business... mercy, forbearance, benevolence was all my business."

"If we open our shut-up hearts freely, we'll discover they're 'hard as flint,'" Jonathan Powers wrote in "Scrooge Is Here." "No steel ever struck (from them) generous fire. They remain secret, self-contained, and solitary as an oyster."

We must give of our time, sweat, talent and, where possible, resources to reach the needy. Otherwise, Christmas will elude our grasp.

In our twilight years, the wife and I cherish the memory of our five small kids breaking open their piggy banks on Christmas Eve. They'd pour out their year's savings into the crib, at the Nino's feet. "For the poor," they'd pray.

The five have disappeared into adults now. But this memory resonates with the truth that mystic poet Angelus Silesius underscored: "Even if Christ should be born a thousand times over in Bethlehem, as long as he is not born in your heart... you shall have been born to no purpose."

God did not come into our hard-as-flint world as "some superstar whose earthly power, beauty, and muscle dwarf us," we're reminded. He appeared as a "vulnerable, thoroughly under-whelming baby."

"God entered human history," the Latin American liberation theologian Leonardo Boff wrote. "He made our lot his own."

This child is "Emmanuel"—God with us. And he is present in our frailties, pain, doubts, disappointments and joys. And in the Child's eyes, in the manger, we "see the humanity, the joyfulness and eternal youth of God."

Merry Christmas!

Silent nights, holy nights

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



alone, though in a richly vibrant way.

The other album was "Baroque Christmas. I love baroque and Bach, in particular. For some reason, I've always associated Christmas with Bach, particularly because I kept hearing 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring' and 'Air in G' in the old dzFE with the advent of Christmas, which in this country comes earlier than everywhere else. The philharmonic-type orchestras used to include them in their repertoire in the free Christmas concerts in the park in days of yore. Those things are gone now, replaced by choral groups in malls, singing to the background sounds of resolute shopping.

There's something hypnotic about the slow, measured, and stately sound of baroque. Even at its loudest, it has a calming effect: I am sure there's a perfectly scientific explanation for why Bach is good for your back. Of course, the same calming effect has also been known to put people to sleep, but that's another story, and in any case that's respite of a sort, too. In its quieter moments, baroque can induce some pretty deep levels of introspection, the kind where your brain starts emitting alpha waves.

The album was a combination of Bach, Corelli et al. and the more popular Christmas carols, "Silent Night," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," etc., arranged baroque-style. (I have an album as well called "Baroque Beatles," some of whose arrangements make the original melodies totally unrecognizable, but with completely marvelous results.) I don't know if my brain started emitting alpha waves while listening to "Baroque Christmas," but I do know it made me feel introspective.

Introspection is a strange and marvelous

thing. It is not greatly appreciated in these parts, where people tend to be gregarious and celebratory, particularly during Christmas, and demand to intrude on everyone, albeit with the best of intentions. We see people who are alone or solitary or lost in thought, and we assume they must be lonely and desperate and going batty having no one to talk to. We assume they need company, and we are only too willing to offer ours. That assumption multiplies a hundredfold during Christmas, when we imagine that being contemplative is being suicidal. For most of us, Christmas automatically means fraternizing, especially with the aid of spirits.

I'm not knocking fraternizing, and even less imbibing, I love both passionately especially where the fraternizing has to do with the best of friends and the imbibing with the best of wines. But it's nice, too, even if only for an hour or two, or maybe even a night or two, to be able to find in Christmas a quiet moment to revel in the company of yourself, grinding the world to a halt, pausing to reflect on nothing in particular and everything in general.

I've always thought Christmas and Lent were the best times for that, Christmas having the advantage over Lent of being more joyous. That temporary withdrawal isn't giving up on life, it is embracing it. Probably quite literally: We're so busy rushing to and fro buying gifts for loved ones, wearing ourselves down to a frazzled state, we fail to see that on this day of days, when the one person Christendom holds to be the Messiah was born, we are astonishingly already the recipients of the greatest gift of all: The gift of life. Whether you think of that life as physical life, in the explosive vitality of a child being born, or as spiritual life, in the even more explosive radiance of the spirit being born (or reborn), you can only stand in awe of it.

Well, either jazz or baroque produces alpha waves in the brain or only the kind of nonsense spouted by fools on the hill. Whatever the case:

Merry Christmas everyone!

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A memorable Christmas for some prisoners

A VERY BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL MY readers. Make the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we commemorate today, bring our nation and the world the much-longed-for gift of peace. This longing is specially plaintive in our country which has seen our peace disrupted in a number of instances.

But there are also beautiful symbols of peace right in our midst. Last Sunday afternoon, in the three-hour Christmas special of "Sining Gising," a program dedicated to reviving traditional art forms, hosted by my radio partner, National Commission on Culture and the Arts executive director Cecile Alvarez, over NBN-4, she did what has not been done before. For our year-end radio show last year, Cecile and I had interviewed the medium-security prisoners at the National penitentiary who performed a song and dance act for us. This year, she requested Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to allow them to join the many choirs she gathered last Sunday for a nationwide Christmas caroling. Gonzalez granted permission on condition that each prisoner would be accompanied by one guard. Serving as "chaperone" was Assistant Solicitor General Karl Miranda, who has been ministering to the prisoners in his spare time for years now. (He even brought his wife and kids to the show).

Part of the President's "cultural caregiving program," the gesture of putting the prisoners on TV touched the hearts of many people, judging from calls the station received. Nuns with Fr. Ben Beltran's Smokey Mountain project wept openly and NCCA Chair Vilma Labrador constantly blinked her eyes as 27 young prisoners (many of them enrolled for undergraduate degrees in the "prison university") sang carols with huge smiles on their faces, swaying with gusto. Later they mixed with everyone to receive gifts, and some kids from other choirs turned over their gifts to them. The young men returned to their bus, their hearts full of inexplicable joy from this most unique experience in the outside world.

That was a most inspired move from Cecile, and her project of cutting an album of songs from inside the prison seems closer to reality,

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda

Olivares-Cunanan

with conductor Jerry Dadap set to give them further training in music. Congratulations.

Christmas is a time to momentarily lay down the cares of everyday life and revel with relatives and friends in the joy of the Christ Child's peace. It's also a time of recollecting happy family events.

My husband and I flew to Honolulu earlier last month for the beautiful—and fun—wedding of his niece, Kristianna Cunanan Angulo, daughter of his sister Juliet and her husband, Emmanuel "Ding" Angulo. Kristianna, who looks very Italian and is a graduate of computer science from Grinnell College in Iowa, married a handsome young man named Shane Patrick Carr, who has a master's degree in computer science from Western Washington University. It was an office romance, as the couple work at Lexis Nexis in Bellevue, Washington.

The Catholic nuptial Mass and rites were held at the Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Honolulu, officiated by visiting Filipino priest Mandy Tipones of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, who has worked in Africa. The wedding was a fusion of Filipino, Spanish, American and Hawaiian culture, which made it so wonderful. From the bride's side, her aunt Perlita and her husband Benito Bengzon, the bride's cousin, Gloria Jabonete-Bouis of Maryland, and my husband and I came in our native *piña* and *justi barongs* and *ternos* and *kimonos*, while the Angulo relatives from Toronto, Canada, came in a mix of Western and Filipino outfits. Juliet ordered wedding *barongs* too for her brand-new son-in-law and his father, Jerry Carr, a retired pilot who's now CEO of his family furniture manufacturing company in Seattle. Also planning in from Seattle were the bride's brother Erwin and his wife Kris-

tine, their two daughters, and her parents Sonny and Bubot Aberin. The groom's party included his 89-year-old grandmother Esther Callender, who remains quite spry and alert, his mother Christine Carr (a dead-ringer for British actress Julie Christie), her brother Bob Callender and his wife Nancy, a Protestant minister, and the groom's accountant-aunt Jessie Carr-Dover and her husband Dave. They were all quite nice and fun people.

The entire wedding party assembled at the century-old old Moana Surfider Hotel at the famed Waikiki Beach, where the wedding reception was later held as well as the picture-taking under gigantic centuries-old trees. Our Filipino finery stopped traffic. From there we all got into a tourist trolley for the ride to the church. The trolley was festooned with bunting and open on all sides, which was great for enjoying the scenery. But on the ride back to the hotel reception, the rains poured and there wasn't enough cover. At the Moana Surfider penthouse veranda, we took in the breath-taking Waikiki sunset while sipping cocktails, before filing into the dining area for a sumptuous dinner. The tables featured very tall vases with fresh Hawaiian blooms artistically arranged by the bride's mother, a professional florist in Portland, Oregon. She had worked on all the flower arrangements for both the church and the reception for two whole nights, refusing help from anyone since we weren't competent enough for her. She badly missed her partner in such activity, her sister Yuhum Cunanan Ong, who had to stay in Manila for health reasons. Everyone oohed and aahed at Juliet's masterpieces for her only daughter's wedding.

Everything worked like clockwork. For instance, when the bride's father, the Filipino group's "official driver," and Juliet fetched us from the airport, we also passed for the tons of flowers that were going to be used. There was also a lot of humor. Fr. Mandy explained the traditional Filipino ritual involving the *arhae* (from the Spanish word "*arraz*" or earnest money), and startled the groom a bit when he asked, "Are you ready to turn over your money to your wife?"

It was a lovely Hawaiian wedding that will stay in the family memory book for a long while.

Tradition

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

once an elaborate production by the younger set of nine children (headed by my sister Chona with us four younger siblings as her indentured actors and stagehands), but soon became a parody of a talent show as we grew older and our own children turned surlier. The program was followed by the exchange of gifts that after a few minutes soon turned the living room into a disaster site filled with torn wrapping paper, stray ribbons and orphaned boxes.

Through marriages and births, new homes and moves, the Christmas Eve dinner has always seen us gathered in both gluttony and greed. But it always presented a dilemma for my sister-in-law Coratec because her mother's birthday falls on Dec. 24. Some years, dinner would be held up until the "Alabang delegation" could make it from the Tecson family's celebration. In other years, the Tecsons would get together either at lunch time of Dec. 24 or on Dec. 25 to accommodate the Jimenez dinner.

FOR the past two years, because Mrs. Tecson has been ailing, we've given way to her birthday celebration and agreed to move the get-together to the next day. With my brother Bo's passing this February, we understand all the more Coratec's need to be surrounded by her own family.

This still leaves us with the question of what to do for dinner on Christmas Eve, which to me is almost a matter of obeying an inner biological clock, an inner impulse to eat rich foods and tear wrapping paper on that night.

My husband Pie and our children have decided to push through with a celebratory dinner, inviting my sister-in-law Bel and her family, who live next

door, to share the repast with us. I've also invited my sister Charo, who's single, and my recently-widowed sister-in-law Soc to join us. It matters not a bit that we'll all see one another again the next day. After all, Christmas is for family, and in this season, you can't have enough of them!

We've also resolved to break from another tradition this year. In previous Christmases, we created kilometer shopping lists mainly because every member of the extended clan had to receive a present from everyone. But with the children all grown, creating a toyland town under the tree no longer seems necessary. So this year, we're planning instead a simpler exchange, with each family member bringing just a single gift, which will then be raffled. That has cut our shopping chores, not to mention our gift lists, drastically. But my daughter, who is all of 21, complains about missing all that frenzied unwrapping come Christmas, insisting she needs to open more than one designated gift. I'm afraid we, her parents, have to step into the breach this year.

AS I write this, I don't know how our new traditions will hold up, how long they will be observed, and whether they will create memories just as rich and colorful as the ones we now treasure.

What I know is that what matters at this time of year is getting together with people we love—family, friends, colleagues, associates, neighbors—and that how we do it, when we do it, with tables groaning with food or with simple repasts, with harried gift-giving or just with a raffle, are mere details, inconsequential, trivial trimmings on the tree.

We remember Christmas for the gloss we put on the celebration, unaware that it's not the fancy wrappings that matter, but the essence of the season. We celebrate the birth of the Child, but we also celebrate the meaning of family, the reason we go out of our way to create new traditions that accommodate the inevitable changes that come with a growing, expanding, evolving, ever-new community that is the family.

Christmas stories

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I ALWAYS DREAMT OF A HAPPY, festive Christmas. I used to believe that Christmas was a celebration of food and gifts. I was a poor child but I always looked forward to it. And why not? During Christmas, we had delicious food to eat like *suman* at *halaya*. Sometimes we also had *dinuguan* or *pansit*. But most of all, this was the only time my mother would buy me a new dress and, if I was lucky, a nice pair of shoes or sandals to go with it.

In all my childhood years, she did it without fail. There was one time I will never forget. Life was difficult. Father was sick. Mother had to work as a harvester in a farm. Every day, she came home tired but with enough money to buy a day's food for the whole family. As Christmas approached, I noticed that mother was not preparing the usual Christmas food. I was also waiting excitedly for the traditional new dress, but until the day before Christmas, she still had not given me one.

On Christmas Eve, I went to sleep disappointed and in tears. I did not want to wear an old dress to church, knowing all the other children would be wearing new and nice clothes.

Christmas Day came, and I did not want to get out of bed. But there was mother telling me to accompany her to the market. I thought she would buy some nice food for our Christmas lunch, but to my surprise she bought me a beautiful blue dress which she paired with a nice pair of sandals. She had not forgotten! And I was very happy.

Mother had worked and saved so that she could buy me a new dress.

That is the story my mother never tires of telling us every time the Christmas season comes along. It is a touching, sweet and memorable childhood experience.

Now I am thinking and wondering what Christmas experience I could share with my own children in the future. Would it be about last year's Christmas, or this Christmas? Or maybe, the very first Christmases that I had?

For the first five years of my life, every Christmas was celebrated with the whole family, with lots of food and gifts, nice outfits and nice toys, like cars and robots, from Buzz Light-Year to Transformers. Those Christmases were indeed full of fun and joy for me as a young boy. But this is a not an interesting Christmas story to tell.

Now, I am 12 years old and I no longer feel like a young boy sometimes. I don't enjoy toys anymore. I have set aside my Game Boy, but I spend a lot of time on our computer. I don't play yoyo anymore because I think it is a waste of time, but I spend hours and hours reading Harry Potter books or playing basketball or just hanging around with friends. Sometimes I like myself, and sometimes I don't. Maybe it's because I have entered the age of puberty; I just don't understand it. Sometimes I am excited about Christmas, and sometimes I am not. But again, this is still a Christmas story to tell.

I can't think of my own extraordinary Christmas story, but let me say that as I grew up, I have learned that Christmas has a deeper meaning.

For the past six Christmases, we have been decorating the house with glitters and lights and other stuff. We buy nice clothes to wear, and have good food on our table. All of which reminds us that Christmas is about fun and celebration.

But the absence of some members of our family has made a difference. Our family, which used to celebrate Christmas together, is not complete anymore. My grandma died and perhaps she now celebrates Christmas with the Birthday Boy Himself. My father chose to work abroad, and since then he has not returned—not for my graduation or my sister's, not on our birthdays, not even on Christmas Days.

Maybe, these are the reasons why I don't feel excited about Christmas anymore. I miss the people I love. I miss my dad. And just like my mom, who once thought as a child that Christmas is about the happiness of wearing a new dress, I now realize that Christmas is more than that.

Christmas is about love. It's the reason why the Savior was born: to give us the best gift ever. Yes, Christmas is about gifts, but not material gifts. It's about giving and sharing the gift of love.

Christmas is also about having your loved ones around you because there's no better way to celebrate the happiest day of the year than celebrating it with all the people you love most—in my case, my sisters, my mom and, of course, my dad.

I am looking forward to it. I will patiently wait for it. I am waiting for my own Christmas story to tell.

Jan Frederick S. Poblete, 12, is in grade 6 and is the editor in chief of *The Montessorian Voice*, the official newspaper of Bataan Montessori School in Balanga City.

IN THE NEWS



Santa Claus

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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Between hope and despair

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

granted viability of their candidacies is primarily financial. Villar is back in the ranks of the country's dollar billionaires, while Roxas is heir to an old-rich fortune. (Roxas, however, has a real party to back him up, unlike Villar, whose revived Nacionalista won't function without him.)

My point: It's early in the game, and it's still anybody's race. What the Gordon-Garcia "teaser" does is to de-privilege money as a factor of competitiveness. That might redefine the way the game is played.

In late November, when I attempted an analysis of the limits of public outrage before a receptive Rotary Club of Manila, I depended on anecdotal evidence and plain instinct to reach, not a conclusion, but a premise. I assumed, for purposes of presentation, that more and more Filipinos had come to share the perception that "corruption is [now] at its worst."

At that time, I did not know about the controversial Osmeña riders to the October 2007 Pulse Asia survey, which plumbed public perception about corrupt presidents. The results, however, provided my seat-of-the-pants scenario-building with statistical proof. A plurality of voting-age Filipinos now rank Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as more corrupt than Ferdinand Marcos. (I have an idea about why this is so: The public's perception has to do with the reported cash gift-giving right in Malacañang, something which helps explain Palace antipathy toward the priest-governor who revealed it, Among Ed.)

Also in late November, the INQUIRER hosted its third Briefing for CEOs and diplomats, with Randy David as featured analyst. The topic was stark, and

reflected what the INQUIRER opinion editors felt was the true state of the nation: some place "Between hope and despair." Randy drew a vivid picture of a Philippines in transition.

It was clear to me, listening to the engaging discussion, that when the subject was long-term prospects for a nation that was in the throes of modernization, hope was almost palpable. But when attention was brought back to the present day, the pendulum swung the other way, closer to despair.

No use denying it: This is where we are. The toxins that pollute Philippine politics and which President Arroyo acknowledged in her Rizal Day 2002 announcement have not only persisted; they have gained in toxicity. Even the good news on the economic front, such as they are, have been politicized.

How do we negotiate the crooked passage from despair to hope?

The Pope's newest encyclical may sound like an unlikely source of advice, but Benedict XVI is a first-class theologian with a gift for illuminating the role of the laity in the modern world. I think he may have something to say about escaping the political poison in the air. (Besides, Malacañang will come around to "Spe Salvi" one of these days, in its continuing attempt to manage its relations with the Catholic bishops; best to get a head start.)

Hope, the Pope says, does not lie in human institutions alone. "The right state of human affairs, the moral well-being of the world can never be guaranteed simply through structures alone, however good they are." It does not lie in the world either. Because man is truly free, "the kingdom of good will never be definitively established in this world. Anyone who promises the better world that is guaranteed to last for ever is making a false promise; he is overlooking human freedom. Freedom must constantly be won over for the cause of good."

Some may find this unceasing task of winning over human freedom for the cause of good, of always starting over, a cause for despair, but in fact this is the Christian's true source of hope. "A good man," the Roman writer Martial wrote, "is always a beginner."

THE NEWS FROM THE PROVINCES WAS LATE but bracing. On Dec. 15, the Man from Subic and the Woman from Cebu met—unexpectedly—at the launch of a new ship. They ended up launching another, decidedly more vulnerable, vessel: a trial balloon.

As trial balloons go, however, this was a blimp. "Sen. Richard Gordon and Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia have stoked rumors of a potential administration-backed tandem in the 2010 polls after both politicians flirted with the idea of running together," INQUIRER reporter Gil Cabacungan Jr. began his front-page story the other day.

To hear the principals speak, the idea was spur-of-the-moment. "That came out spontaneously," Gordon told me. "I nearly fell out of my seat."

A modest Garcia downplayed the form without denying the substance. "That's all there is to it, really," she said in a text message. "A teaser."

But spontaneous or not, there was definitely something combustible in the idea. Two capable executives (Subic Bay remains a template of development), two proven vote-getters (Garcia's margin in the last election was almost half a million votes, about twice the number of Pampanga voters who elected Among Ed Panlilio).

"We have the same political philosophy," Gordon noted. "It's always 'Can do.' It's always 'Nothing is impossible.' It's always 'Depend on your own.'"

Of course, it doesn't hurt that he hails from Luzon and can ignite a crowd, while Garcia speaks Visayan and sings like a star.

To be sure, the latest poll of 2010-bound presidential candidates I've seen (it's several months old) puts Gordon in the single digit, with Sen. Loren Legarda far and away the survey leader. And I'm not even sure if Garcia is on the list of possible vice-presidential candidates.

But current talk about the presidential race centers on the presumptive (or maybe even presumptuous) candidacies of Senators Manny Villar and Mar Roxas. They did not fare all that well in that survey I saw either, but the taken-for-

God's blessing to the nation

IT HAS BEEN OVER TWO YEARS since I first stepped inside the office of Manuel Morato, a director of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), to ask for a reconsideration of my application as an online lottery agent. The second time was last Dec. 11, to personally thank the good director for his kind assistance despite my being a complete stranger to him.

As I expected, the place was teeming with people whose "only fault" was their being poor. A true Christian would not miss Jesus Christ on their faces. Mixing myself with the crowd, I could not help but sympathize with them as they carried their daily "crosses," so to speak, in letters written in ordinary yellow pad paper addressed to Morato, seeking financial and medical assistance.

While waiting for Morato, who was at the PCSO's drawing court that afternoon, I saw a young mother approached the amiable,

Tikya dela Torre, appointments secretary in the director's office, for an audience with him. Her child couldn't hear and needed to be operated on both ears. We all know how mothers feel when their young ones are sick. It is they who mostly feel the pain. They will move heaven and earth to find a solution to end their child's misery. I saw with my own eyes this young mother's glum face and eyes light up when she heard that she would be granted her request soon. Indeed, God works in mysterious ways.

Morato's genuine concern for the less fortunate is like a "fresh breath of air" on a dawning day, a source of strength for those who are on the verge of losing hope. Morato is a rare breed among the President's men. On the other hand, I cannot speak for those public servants who reek with unbelievable arrogance, incredible callousness and impunity.

To the "Doubting Thomases," go to the PCSO and see that, although this administration has some faults, there is still a government agency working quietly—yes, without fanfare—to alleviate the plight of the poor in our society.

The PCSO is God's blessing to a nation a significant part of which are poor, downtrodden, destitute and homeless—content to live in God-forsaken nooks like those found under bridges and along esteros. It is the same sector that, time and again, is deceived by the "trapos" every election period with promises of moon and stars. The PCSO is one government agency that has done a herculean task of lessening the poor's burden. Unlike the "trapos," the PCSO does not promise anything—it just delivers.

—ROMULO O. PEÑA,
2381 Del Pan St.,
Sta. Ana, Manila

Just one restroom for everyone at every LRT station

IF YOU WANT TO SUFFER urinary tract infection (UTI), take the LRT for two weeks. I am from Mindanao, specifically, from Panabo City, Davao del Norte.

I've been in Manila many times these past five years. Riding the LRT or MRT used to be a fervent wish. Until, I finally to experience it on Nov. 14, 2007—from Bacalaran to Recto then to Pureza.

At the first station, I was quite nervous. Friends and relatives had told me that it would be a rocket-fast, snaky ride, and that I needed to watch out for "pick pocketers and snatchers." Transferring from one station to another was quite fun. Until I had to use a comfort room to take a leak. It was a real surprise for me to find out that there was only one comfort room in the station. Yes, just one comfort room assigned

to everyone whether disabled, male or female. Worse, it was very dirty. Imagine, 10-25 persons falling in line to use a filthy, poorly maintained comfort room!

I think LRT costs more than a billion pesos. But how come it can't provide separate comfort rooms, one for the men, another for the women, and still another for the disabled. How come it can't hire janitors to keep the comfort rooms clean? Talk about gender sensitivity and sanitation. Can't Malacañang and the officials of Light Railway Transit Authority and the Department of Transportation and Communications do something about this?

When I finally got back to my auntie's residence in Pasay City, I immediately told my relatives about the horrible experience. I

was astounded to learn that many of our friends and relatives working in Manila had suffered UTI or bladder infection from the dirty comfort rooms of the LRT.

The Philippines is ranked sixth among gender sensitive countries. It is an awardee for gender sensitivity with a public transport system that is insensitive to the different and sensitive needs of genders?

My questions are:

1. Have Malacañang, DOTC and LRTA officials taken an LRT ride?
2. Can't they solve this simple problem that calls for the installation of not-so-costly but very important facilities?

—LYM RELAMPAGOS ONGOY,
Block 2, Lot 36,
Bayside View Village,
Cagangohan, Panabo City,
Davao del Norte

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Sorrow is self-made

ALL ENDINGS—LIKE DEATH, marriage and retirement—are sad.

Retirement ends an employment. It brings both sadness and happiness, but really more of sadness in the final count. But the bitter truth is sadness is mostly self-made.

For me, retirement is where we begin to live again. As if we are re-born. We document and immortalize memories for the simple reason of remembering and feeling young again. We become more sensitive to others. The rough corners in one's relationships are made smoother not because we are older but because we have acquired more patience and a stronger character. As we then retrace our steps, we come to recognize truths and principles we overlooked when we were young. We learn more from the mistakes and lapses of the past because we are now brave enough to face up to them, whereas before we tended to just ignore them. We now value some people (even enemies) more because they helped us become what we are now. We now come to accept life not as a burden but as a gift to be relished in our hearts.

Retirement allows us to re-chart our lives through the eyes of a new and different man—and to superimpose the chart over the playing field of youth. We begin to forget our hurts, forgive our enemies, forget ourselves and cherish life through the endless cycle of joy and grief and rebirth. There's a lesson to be learned at this point and explanations help. At times, there are simply no explanations. In the end all we have is ourselves and, if we are lucky, the understanding of a friend or two.

In retirement I take my time. I relish the glow of the past as I test and thirst for the waters of my remaining years while listening to the tick of encroaching time. Yes, there's virtue and patience as when we wait for the wine to reach its perfect taste. Now I ride toward the sunset, head held up high, knowing that I have crossed my Rubicon.

—FRED C. LABASAN,
Capas, Tarlac

Where were Trillanes' sympathizers

IT IS SO AMAZING HOW SOME people distort the truth. From the comfort of my flat in Saudi Arabia, I saw how the failed rebellion progressed and how it was eventually crushed. Media coverage was simply too one-sided. The shots were too studied, the replays too selective—all in favor of the rebels. And the media conglomerates still have the temerity to complain?

From the vantage point of my TV set, I saw how the presence of media personalities inside the Peninsula hotel prevented the police from carrying out their planned assault. Why begrudge the police for using their weapons? The rebels deserved to die, for such is risk of rebellion. Had they succeeded, then, they would have been the heroes.

If government, as represented by the police, indeed did not care about civilian lives, it could have easily "pulverized" the rebels' dugout with its superior fire power and blew to smithereens those rascals disguised as freedom fighters. That one of them was a bishop or a former vice president was not reason enough to save them from punishment. Old men, by their age, are supposed to be already aware that they are responsible for their actions; they should not cry like babies when herded into a police van. You do wrong, you must be mature enough to accept the consequences of the act.

We now read and hear endless litanies of complaints from sympathizers of the rebels. My golly. Where were they when Antonio Trillanes IV et al. were begging for warm bodies in the Peninsula Manila? They shouldn't be too righteous because the truth is they are no better than the person their ilk wants to remove and replace.

I am glad Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo does not hold her punches when dealing with miscreants. I'd rather have her in government than these pseudo moralists whose only claim to fame is their perennial participation in failed coups, rebellions and what not.

To people who spend all their time plotting the ouster of GMA, and even to the biased media, here's my challenge: Provide the warm bodies immediately at the first minute of a coup instead of pontificating later, after it has failed.

In fact, I want the rebels to succeed so that I can witness how the winning military junta will shut down media facilities, impose curfew indefinitely, and clamp down on rallies and other forms of mass gathering. Then, we will see a new breed of complainants; the same people now romanticizing the idea of extra-constitutionally ousting a president.

—AHMAD CORTES,
ahscor2001@yahoo.com

Tenor of headline questioned

FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING INTO the turf of INQUIRER editors, but I have always wondered if the newspaper's headlines were always apt and correct, or were merely meant to sensationalize or catch attention.

There were some instances in the past that I did not agree with the headlines but I kept silent because it was none of my business. But the Nov. 30, "Trillanes revolt crushed" irked me.

The common perception of "revolt" is something bloody and confrontational. The common perception of "crushed" is something violent or fierce.

The action of Trillanes was neither confrontational nor violent. It was, as a matter of fact, only a

show of bravado and challenge. He carried no gun and relied only on people getting outraged and spilling into the streets—which never happened.

If the headline were something like "Trillanes dare fizzles out" or "Trillanes show goes pfft," it would have been more realistic and interesting.

By the way, the show of force by the police and military was an overkill. Ramming and destroying the glass doors of the hotel was stupid. And what do you know? The police only lobbed tear gas and did not even have to get inside.

—RICARDO D. DIZON,
28 Molave St.,
Marikina Heights, Marikina City

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Handwritten responses to the survey questions are visible in the background of the form area.

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Sumilao farmers expect long struggle

By Ryan D. Rosaura
Inquirer Mindanao

SUMILAO, BUKIDNON—THE 55 FARMERS WHO marched 1,700 kilometers to Manila in 60 days returned home in San Vicente village here on Dec. 23 bringing "a little more meaning" to their Christmas.

After struggling for 10 years, the farmers' spirits are buoyed by "inch-by-inch victories," confident these can propel to their eventual ownership of the disputed 144-hectare estate.

They met with President Macapagal-Arroyo to relay their travails in claiming the 144-hectare land and heard the commitment of the Catholic Church taking the cudgels for them in continuing their cause.

Samuel Merida, president of the Mapalad Multi-Purpose Cooperative, said the decision by the Office of the President to revoke the 1996 land conversion order issued by then executive secretary Ruben Torres gives sparkle to their Yuletide feast.

The revocation is their principal call since 2004.

Merida said they will use whatever "small victories" they achieved from their walk "to rejuvenate and gather strength for the long struggle ahead."

The 1996 land conversion order gave the Norberto Quisumbing Sr. Management and Development Corp. (NQS-RMDC), then owner of the disputed estate, an escape from the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

It voided the certificate of land ownership award (Closa) earlier given by the Department of Agrarian Reform to the Sumilao farmers in September 1995.

With its revocation, the estate is again placed under CARP and will be subjected to redistribution among qualified beneficiaries.

In 1995, 137 Mapalad members were identified beneficiaries for the estate's redistribu-

tion but now it has grown to 165, said Frank Atillo, paralegal staff of the nongovernment group Balaod Mindanaw.

"Now, we return hopeful. Hope that is buoyed by the strong support we received all over the country," said Restituto Anlicao, a Mapalad member.

With guarded optimism, Hilda San-ahan, who at 58 was the oldest marcher, said she looked forward to the farmers reclaiming the estate "as promised to us by the President."

She quoted Ms Arroyo as telling her during their meeting in Malacañang: "Nang Hilda, don't worry now because you will get back your land."

"I hope she is sincere," San-ahan said in the dialect.

Roldan Anlicao, 19, the youngest marcher, said although the fruits are yet to be seen, he felt happy over Ms Arroyo's commitment to give back to Sumilao farmers the land.

Last stretch

Another source of hope is the "ownership by the Catholic Church" of the Sumilao farmers' struggle.

San-ahan said Manila Archbishop Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, who once served as long-time prelate of the Malaybalay diocese covering Bukidnon, "assured us the Church will take up the campaign in our behalf."

Xavier Alpasa, SJ, executive director of the Ateneo's Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB), said the farmers took their last march covering about 10 km from Concordia to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines



RELATIVES of Sumilao farmers wait in the twilight rain for the arrival of their kin.

LINA SAGARAL REYES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

(CBCP) office on Dec. 21.

The marchers arrived in Cagayan de Oro around 7:30 a.m. aboard a military C-130 plane. They then proceeded to take breakfast and rest at the Lumbia village chapel near the airport.

After lunch, the farmers were feted for some 30 minutes by the Jesuit community at Xavier University. They conveyed for Sumilao around 3 p.m.

The marchers arrived in San Vicente village around 6 p.m. amid a mild downpour aboard three jeepney trips from Cagayan de Oro. But the rain was drowned by roars of excited applause and outbursts of cheers.

An emotional homecoming swept the small village of the Mapalad farmers just near the

disputed estate as the marchers were reunited with family, friends and relatives after being away for 75 days.

Each marcher brought home goodies packed in large plastic bags, given them by support groups in Manila.

Next steps

Balaod Mindanaw's Atillo recognizes that there are "crucial administrative straits that need to be navigated" as a result of the latest twist in the Sumilao case.

"We returned home because the next steps in our struggle will take place here. In the next few days, we shall challenge DAR to immediately issue the notice [of coverage] to put into concrete actions the decision of the President," explained Merida.

The provincial agrarian reform officer is tasked with issuance of the notice. The regional director may also do the issuance.

Merida further said that with the commitment of Ms Arroyo to give back the land to the farmers, "there is no more reason for DAR to drag its feet" on the matter. He was referring to the November 2004 revocation petition filed by the farmers with DAR but was only acted upon on August 2006.

Merida also noted the non-action on the recommendations of two DAR northern Mindanao regional directors for the revocation of the 1996 land conversion order; the first done as early as 2005.

Farmers' gain should spread to others, says militant solon

By Jerome Aning

THE MILITANT FARMERS' GROUP Kilusang Magbubulid ng Pilipinas yesterday appealed to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to help landless peasants in the country in their fight to own the lands they are tilling.

Rafael Mariano, KMP chair and concurrent president of Anakpawis party-list group, said only 9,500 landlords own and control almost 21 percent of all agricultural lands in the country.

"That is almost three million hectares for just 9,500 individuals, while more than two million farmers have to eke out a living from just half a hectare per family, because they are forced to divide 18.5 percent of all farm lands, which is about 2.5 million hectares," Mariano, citing data from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, said in a statement.

Mariano said the country's biggest landlord to date is Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco who owns 30,000 hectares of land in Negros, Isabela, Cagayan, Davao del Sur, Cotabato, Palawan and other parts of the country.

"He also plans to take over around 13,085 hectares in Ilagan, Isabela's Hacienda San Antonio and Hacienda Sta. Isabel," he said.

Mariano said the success of the Sumilao farmers in gaining ownership of 144 hectares should spread to majority of peasant farmers in the country who do not own the land they till.

"We are one with the CBCP in struggling for genuine land reform and against social injustice, that is why we are asking them to extend the same type of help and assistance they gave the Sumilao farmers to other peasants as well," he added.

Union leader of banana firm claims getting new death threats amid job negotiations

COMPOSTELA VALLEY—THE leader of a union of workers of a banana plantation here received fresh death threats in the midst of an ongoing negotiation on the terms of their employment under the Fresh Bananas Agricultural Co. (FBAC), a subsidiary of Sumitomo Fruits Corp.

Joel Cuyos, president of the Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa San Jose-National Federation of Labor Unions-Kilusang Mayo Uno (Namasan-NAFLU-KMU), said he got the new death threat through his mobile phone afternoon of Dec. 16.

The message, he said, warned him about hired men on the loose and out to get him.

Last Sunday, he said, three suspicious-looking men were seen "surveying" the packing plant where he works.

In 2006, the group of Cuyos staged a 6-month strike when FBAC and Sumitomo terminated them. In February this year, the company was forced to give the workers back their jobs, and both parties have been in negotiations ever since.

"I have no doubt of the intention of these death threats. I have received the same when we were on strike, struggling to be let back to work. Now suspicious men are frequenting my house and the packing plant while we are in negotiation for

the terms of our employment," he said.

In September, during a negotiation with company officials, the company maintained that for the workers to continue working in the plantation, they must apply in an agency that provides laborers to the company. The agency, called East Star, is known as a labor-only contracting agency. The practice is prohibited as it circumvents labor laws, especially because it expunges the employer-employee relationship, stripping the workers of the benefits and labor securities.

But the workers, knowing that their length of service will be cut if they agreed, refused to agree to

the precondition set by the company who, in turn, asserted that the workers be paid on piece rate. The workers also disagreed with the arrangement as it violates the labor law that set standards on wages of workers.

Robert Lausa, spokesperson of the KMU-Southern Mindanao, expressed alarm over the fresh threats against Cuyos. He believes that the struggle of the union for just wages and compensation for workers has something to do with the threat.

The INQUIRER tried to get comments from the banana firm but was told that no one was there to issue a statement. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

NEWSBRIEFS

Drive vs firecrackers in Negros Oriental

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Philippine National Police in Negros Oriental has asked barangay officials to help in the campaign to curb injuries and death due to pyrotechnics during Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Negros Oriental police provincial director Senior Supt. Melvin Ramon G. Buenafe said the police were coordinating with barangay captains in the province, for the latter to designate "firecracker zones" in their respective barangays.

Buenafe added that several residents in the province have complained against indiscriminate exploding of pyrotechnics since this poses danger, inconvenience and a source of annoyance.

Buenafe also asked the people to cooperate to avoid injury and even death.

Romy Amarado, Inquirer Visayas

LTO fires 12 deputized agents

COTABATO CITY—The Land Transportation Office in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has revoked the appointments of at least 12 deputized agents on Dec. 12 over complaints of extortion from motorists.

Suwaib Tuto, LTO director, said motorists passing by Pagalungan town in Maguindanao have been complaining about the activities of the deputized agents.

Deputized agents are not necessarily LTO employees. In some cases, they are being paid by local government units, he said.

Tuto said the deputized agents, whose appointments have been rescinded, were led by a Wilky Kamama.

Prior to the cancellation of their appointments, one motorist complained to reporters that he was held by Kamama's group for about two hours without any clear violation.

"It's not clear what my (traffic) violation was. One of the apprehending officers told me to just pay cash without issuance of an LTO receipt and that will be fine," he said in another interview.

Tuto said he did not receive a formal complaint against Kamama's group but he acted immediately after hearing about their illegal activity on the radio.

Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

Batasan blast victim recovering

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Rep. Henry Pryde Teves, one of the victims of the Nov. 13 Batasang Pambansa bombing, may be well enough to report for work when Congress resumes its session in the third week of January.

Teves' grandfather and predecessor, Herminio, said the young congressman is recuperating in a private room at the St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City.

Representative Teves was transferred out of the intensive care unit just before his 35th birthday on Dec. 18.

Teves said the congressman has started to sit on his bed and will soon be walking with a walker.

Negros Oriental Gov. Emilio Macias II visited the young Teves last Tuesday.

Macias, who is also a medical doctor, said he was happy to see the congressman was not only out of danger but "is in a state of fast recovery."

Alex Pal, Inquirer Visayas

MOONLIT CHRISTMAS
The moon shed some light over Baguio's brightly-lit Yuletide, as the Christmas rush consumes the summer capital's residents.
VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON



Slain UN worker home for Christmas

Baguio centennial passports to be offered to tourists

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY TOURISM OFFICE will soon hand out passports to tourists to help raise money for Baguio's urban reclamation and greening projects that will be timed with its centennial in 2009.

The "Baguio pasaporte" project has been launched to help the city keep track of visitors and residents who subscribe to the program.

But the green passport has added features. It holds a map and a travel guide, and can be used to secure discounts from certain hotels and restaurants, said retired forester Rosalio Goze, a member of the Baguio Community of Volunteers Movement.

The group is operating the passport system for the city government as its contribution to the centennial countdown.

Each passport, and the discount services it offers, has a shelf life of two years and will be available on Jan. 1, 2008, said Jalis Baldo, the program's marketing officer.

It has a manual to teach visitors "a hundred ways to enjoy Baguio" through their likely destinations, including the Baguio Cathedral, the Philippine Military Academy, Burnham Park, the presidential mansion, and Camp John Hay.

The passport also promotes the products of establishments, like the Good Shepherd Convent, whose jams and peanut brittle have a big following in Metro Manila.

It "is non-transferrable, so it means we take it seriously," Goze said.

Passport subscribers will have to pay an accreditation fee. Proceeds will capitalize centennial conservation programs.

"We laid out the programs to the city government for funding but they could not grant us a budget so this is our alternative," he said.

Goze is administering the program to re-green all the gateways leading to the summer capital.

Benedicto Alhambra, city tourism officer, said a recent survey confirmed that the biggest regret visitors had about Baguio was its disappearing pine scent.

"When you enter the zigzag road, you expect that pine smell to [permeate your vehicle], but urbanization and growing population have eroded the forest cover," Alhambra said.

The group's greening campaign hopes to reverse this trend, he said.



KINGS OF THE ROAD

The rough terrain in Tigbao, Zamboanga del Sur, force farmers to walk home along with their horses.

JULIE S. ALIPALA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Benguet exec scores gov't on WB advisory on agri

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—GOV. Nestor Fongwan said a World Bank (WB) advisory asking the government to put more investments in agriculture has recognized the farmers' crucial role as producers and entrepreneurs of countryside development.

But he said the success of capital resources poured into agriculture would still depend on how national policies would respond to farmers' clamor for industry protection and lesser bureaucracy for fund transfer intended for agriculture from the national treasury.

"This is because of the constant threat posed by importation due to free trade and the autonomy given by the Local Government Code to towns and provinces," he said.

He said vegetable producing provinces, like Benguet, were also challenged to strike a balance between their agriculture programs and environmental thrusts.

Fongwan attended recently the presentation of the bank's 2008 World Development Report held via

video conference at Saint Louis University in Baguio City where the bank advocated for more investments in agriculture to solve rural poverty.

The government's Millennium Development Goals wanted poverty and hunger eradicated by 2015.

Fongwan said the WB report has put more pressure on the province to come up with strategies to sustain its agriculture production in relation to its flagship programs for the next two years.

These are the inventory and protection of communal forests and the establishment of a sound solid waste management program.

He asked Benguet's 13 mayors in a recent meeting to give priority to the protection of their towns' watersheds and waste management side by side with agriculture development.

But he assailed the national government for being lukewarm to the devolved functions of local governments and its failure to provide more funds for agricultural mod-

ernization.

Despite the devolution of agriculture to the provinces, financial support for agriculture programs had remained below expectations, he said.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (Afma) is an example of how the government failed to strengthen the functions of local agriculture, he said.

"Until now, funds have arrived slowly or they have failed to arrive, making the devolved functions of local governments over agriculture weak if not useless," he said.

The Afma (Republic Act No. 8435) was enacted in 1998 to provide budgetary and logistical requirements needed for the modernization of the country's agricultural base, leading to a rapid shift towards industrialization.

"The mandate for local government units to develop their agriculture was provided by law but the resources are not coming," Fongwan said. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

MOGPOG, MARINDUQUE—"MAUWI AKO ngayong Pasko (I will be home this Christmas)."

These were the words Gene Luna, the United Nations World Food Program (UN-WFP) Filipina finance officer killed in a bombing in Algeria last Dec. 11, said to her eldest sister, Lilian, a day before the deadly incident.

Eleven days after, Luna was indeed home and reunited with her family. Only this time, their Christmas will not be a happy one.

Lilian said that her sister told her in an online chat last Dec. 10 that she would be coming home for Christmas.

That was the last time that Lilian, an education program specialist for music and arts at the central office of the Department of Education, had communicated with her younger sister.

"We had been looking forward to her visit but we did not expect that our Christmas homecoming would be a sad one," said the elder Luna, holding back her tears.

"There was never any hint that something tragic would befall her a day after," added Lilian.

Miriam Navela-Garcia, a relative and close friend of the victim, said there were no premonitions that something bad would happen to Luna.

Lilian recalled how loving and caring her sister was. "She was very accommodating to all," Lilian said.

Lilian and Navela-Garcia said they had always been against Gene's decisions to work in Afghanistan and Algeria, for safety reasons.

"We prevented her from working in Afghanistan and Algeria but her decisions always prevailed," said Lilian.

"She usually told us that death is inevitable," the elder Luna said.

"For us, she will always be a hero, not just for the Filipinos but for the whole of humanity," she added.

Lilian was also very thankful to the UN-WFP staff members for all the support their family got from them.

"The UN-WFP was there for us from the time that I was informed of my sister's death up to the present," she said.

Luna's remains will be buried on Dec. 26 at the Mogpog Municipal Cemetery, after a necrological service at 8 a.m. and a Mass at the San Isidro Parish Church of Mogpog from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. *Gerald Gene R. Querubin, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



GENE Luna's graduation picture displayed in her home in Mogpog, Marinduque.
GERALD GENE QUERUBIN

Retired agriculturist helps Aeta replant native rice seedlings

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

BOTOLAN, PAMPANGA—OLD AS HE MAY be, Rafael Velez has gone out of his way to help the Aeta on the Pampanga side of Mt. Pinatubo make their wish come true.

On Dec. 20, the 70-year-old retired government agriculturist has collected at least four indigenous rice varieties that are still grown, although minimally, by the Aeta in Botolan, a town on the western side of the volcano.

That done, Velez said the Aeta here have helped their *patel* (kinfolk) in Pampanga succeed in seed collection, the first step in resuming the cultivation of traditional varieties on *gasak* (farms) at the slopes of the now calm volcano.

"We can start multiplying these now," he said, cupping the grains of Kinampanya, Balitnao, Binundok and Amerikano on his right hand.

Velez calls this set "Baluga varieties." Baluga is another name for the Aeta, but the educated ones among them find the term derisive.

Those varieties are grown in the villages of Nacolcol, Palis and Cabatuan, about eight hours by walking from Barangay Itanglew and crossing a gray landscape of lahar (mud, ash and sand) that has filled the Baquilan River.

Velez has travelled this far, taking also a two-day break from his own farm in Guagua, Pampanga, because he sensed urgency and wisdom in the request of an Aeta leader.

Helping him out in the journey was Noel Parico, the executive director of Kapampangan Marangal Inc., to which Velez is a volunteer.

Benny Capuno, leader of the Lamuan Kata, a tribal organization in Porac town, has asked him to do his bit in improving their plight.

Rice, Capuno said, was rarely eaten now in the tribe. According to him, the Aeta of Porac failed to take the seeds with them in their rush to evacuate to the lowlands as the volcano began to be restive.

The June 1991 eruptions spilled hot mudflows that burned the farms and much of the area on the slopes, leaving a few flora and fauna to survive, volcanologists and naturalists said.

Those who have returned and revived their plots have been mainly subsisting on sweet potatoes or yam, Capuno said.

What he wants is for his tribe to have a sufficient and steady supply of rice as a food source rather than as cash crop.

Eduardo Badar of Barangay Cabatuan has managed to bank some seeds during the exodus out of Botolan, sealing these tight in a plastic bag that he guarded with his own life as he and his family moved from one town to another.

"I kept the seeds, hoping that someday we could farm again in our old village," Badar told the INQUIRER. Other Aeta did the same, he said.

It has been a hit-and-miss thing since 1995. Many of the attempts proved unsuccessful because of the high acidity of the soil then, but quite a number of tries did well, Badar said.

Some Aeta have shifted to planting high-yielding varieties promoted by the government but the folk are realizing that these need a lot of costly inputs, according to Badar's sister, village councilor Elsa Novo.

Velez, a graduate of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños in Laguna, lost his collection of upland varieties to the 1991 eruptions and the floods that worsened as lahar clogged rivers. These include Binakayo, Pinili, Pane, Sinemberga, Kinampanya, Kinako, Gudoy, Binundok, Pinukyutan and Kalibo.

Even so, he continues to trust the upland varieties because they have "exceptional traits."

"The grains are soft, fragrant and sturdy against insects. They don't need much watering. The quality does not change no matter how many years you plant them. That's unlike the high value crops that over the years regain the traits of their parent variety," Velez said.

Among the provinces, Aklan is "very conscious" in preserving its traditional rice varieties, he said.

"The Aeta have sounded their desire to be self-reliant and they deserve support," he said.

In the next weeks, he would multiply the seeds by planting these in his farm and in a plot volunteered by Capuno. For a start, they are targeting distributing 20 kilos of seeds to every family.

Velez said he would not stop there. "I hope to introduce nature-friendly technology in winnowing and drying," he said.



VELEZ CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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**that
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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

Atienza gifts Baguio with 20-foot flag

BAGUIO CITY—ENVIRONMENT Secretary Lito Atienza sent the city an unusual Christmas gift on Dec. 18: A 20-foot long Philippine flag, which was raised for the first time at a flagpole near Camp John Hay's old main gate.

Atienza had teased Mayor Reynaldo Bautista Jr. about the small and tattered flag hanging on the same pole when the secretary launched the local leg of the Green Philippines program on Nov. 28.

Speaking in Filipino, Atienza told Bautista he would gladly donate a flag because sustaining the country's presence on what used to be American soil was more important than the programs the government had laid out for Camp John Hay, a former American rest and recreation facility.

Everybody thought Atienza was joking, so city officials were surprised when the flag was delivered to City Hall this week.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Cordillera director Samuel Penafiel said Bautista tried to dissuade Atienza during the program, saying the city government has funds to buy its own flag.

Tree-cutting ban

Officials of the DENR here said the flag also meant Atienza was keeping an eye on Camp John Hay, where he planted his first pine tree, alongside saplings planted by Bautista and Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan.

Atienza has issued a directive that restricts DENR regional directors from issuing tree-cutting permits, the INQUIRER learned.

In the 1990s, residents here protested when prospective developers of Camp John Hay offered development plans that required the massive cutting of pine trees.

The city government has also become critical of how Camp John Hay development has progressed because its leaseholder, the Fil Estate-owned, Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco), has outstanding rental debts estimated to have reached at least P2.3 billion since 2005.

Lawyer Georgina Alvarez, CJHDevco senior vice-president for legal affairs, received Atienza's gift on the city's behalf.

Alvarez, who grew up in the city, said keeping the Philippine flag raised at John Hay increases its relevance to the community.

She said the flag reveals how much care the community brings to maintain the Camp John Hay forest, which now represents the "lungs" of Baguio City because it is the largest cluster of pine tree cover left here.

"The flag must always fly over Camp John Hay, because the stewardship of Baguio's last remaining jewel has been transferred onto the shoulders of the community from the American military," she said.

Vincent Cabreza, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Cebu trader linked to luxury car deals

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—AN INFLUENTIAL Cebuano businessman, who has connections with politicians, has been importing high-end cars from Europe for more than a year, an official of the broker's association in Cebu alleged.

Ricky Gantuangco, external vice president of the Professional Brokers Association of the Philippines-Visayas, said he received reports from an insider at the Bureau of Customs that the businessman, whom he refused to name, could import luxury cars from Europe at least once a month.

Gantuangco said two of the

congressmen-friends of the businessman come from Mindanao while the third is from Cebu.

He added that the businessman was allowed to bring in luxury cars because of his congressmen-friends.

The Cebu Auto Dealers Association (Cada) had earlier complained of car smuggling in Cebu.

Gantuangco has called for a congressional inquiry after Cada exposed the huge discrepancy over the registration of new and used vehicles.

He said he would ask for an executive session if called to testify during the House investigation on the alleged car smuggling in Cebu.

gling in Cebu.

"I am willing to give the names of those I learned who are involved in the smuggling activities in an executive session but what I am after is how to correct the system," Gantuangco said.

He added he has some recommendations, which could help curb or even stop the car smuggling.

He recommended the improvement of the Customs systems by inviting representatives of Cada, Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group, the brokers association and civil society, to witness the scanning of container vans.

"What is really important is to focus on how to improve the sys-

tem [and] not to run against these persons who will just use all the excuses to absolve them from any crime," Gantuangco said.

Jose Manuel Cuenco, president of Cada, also said some businessmen in Cebu who were importing luxury vehicles had friends in "high places."

Cuenco alleged that more than 10 businessmen in Cebu had influential friends in Congress and in other government agencies, such as the Land Transportation Office and Customs.

These friends have been conniving in the car smuggling activities, which have been going on for the past five years, he

added.

Cuenco claimed that the businessmen first engaged in importing surplus parts and vehicles, then expanded to bringing in used luxury cars and have been involved in car theft.

He expressed hope that the brokers would testify in Congress because they knew more.

Cada had claimed that the smuggling of luxury cars had become rampant in Cebu as evidenced by almost 20,000 difference between the number of vehicles registered by the LTO in the region in 2006 compared to the number of cars sold by legitimate car dealers.

Unresolved coco levy issue spoils farmers' Yule mood

LUCENA CITY—THE DECADES-old issue of the coconut levy often spoils the holiday mood of Quezon farmers as they recall their struggle for the return of the multibillion-peso taxes exacted by the Marcos regime.

"During our Christmas fellowship, the issue of the coconut levy would almost always crop up. All wanting to know when it will be returned by the government," said Jay Lim, spokesperson of the Kapatiran at Alyansang Alay sa Kaunlaran ng Bayan (Kaakbay-Quezon), a coalition of nongovernment organizations in Quezon province with mostly coconut farmers as members.

He said the sensitive topic often spoiled the holiday mood of the party, affecting especially the aging and sickly coconut farmers.

Tears

"After we give them the updates on the coco levy and the government's continuous indifference to their plight, most of the old members often shed tears of desperation," Lim said.

He lamented the decreasing attendance at the annual gathering of the old coconut farmers, the main contributors to the levy.

"Most of them are now gone, others are sick and bedridden. Can the government do something for them?" Lim asked.

Quezon, a coconut-producing province, is believed to be the biggest contributor to the coconut levy, a tax exacted from coconut farmers from 1973 to 1982.

According to analysts, the levy fund has since grown to

P130 billion.

Lim reiterated the coalition's call for the government to return the levy to the farmers.

Two Quezon lawmakers have asked the Department of Finance not to use the proceeds from the proposed sale of the state-owned 24-percent stake in food and drinks giant San Miguel Corp. to cover the government budget deficit.

In House Resolution No. 54, proponents Rep. Proceso J. Alcala and Rep. Lorenzo R. Tañada III argued that the court had declared that the controversial levy was owned by the government in trust for all the coconut farmers and thus, should be returned for their benefit.

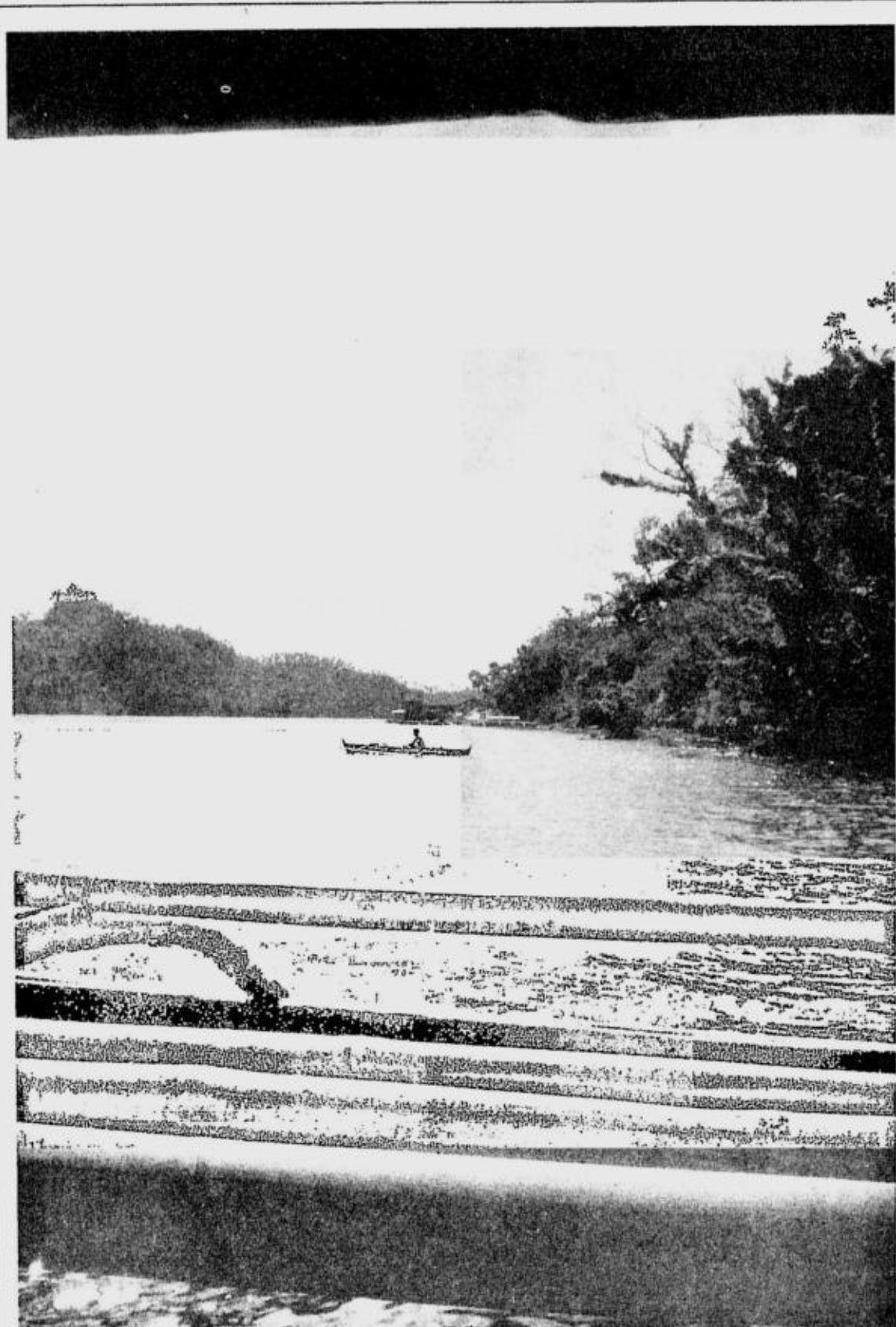
Proposed sale

The proposed sale and use of the levy assets by the government through the DOF would only bring injustice to the coconut farmers, they said in the resolution.

Reports said the DOF was planning to sell the 24-percent SMC shares to help reduce the government budget deficit to make up for the short falls in tax and duty collections by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

In separate House Resolution No. 357, Alcala urged President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Department of Agriculture and the DOF to take steps to use the levy assets, particularly the 24 SMC shares, for the relief of the coconut farmers.

The Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that the coco levy fund is a prima facie public fund. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., *Inquirer Southern Luzon*



QUIET GETAWAY

Remote islands situated east of mainland Albay province in Southern Luzon are a paradise getaway for any tourist during the holidays.

JAYMEE T. GAMIL/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Negros Oriental products showcased in Buglasan fest

By Alex Pal
Inquirer Visayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—NEGROS Oriental Gov. Emilio Macias II may be moving a lot of earth, cement and wood to finish the Sidlakang Negros Tourism Village in time for the Buglasan Festival here, but he would need more than human energy to stop the rains.

Despite the efforts undertaken to complete the project when the festival started on Dec. 21, it has yet to be completed.

The Sidlakang Negros Tourism Village is being used as the site of the Buglasan Festival, which would end Jan. 1, 2008.

The one-hectare tourism village has booths for the province's 20 towns and five cities where their local delicacies and harvests would be sold the whole year.

"One of my friends told me that she went to the Carmelites bringing a couple of dozen eggs [to ask for the rain to stop]," Macias said.

Although a Protestant in his religious beliefs, Macias apparently has nothing against bringing offerings of eggs to the Carmelite convent to ask them to pray for the

success of the Buglasan Festival.

The rains have been preventing the workers from laying asphalt on the road. But the governor said that the mud should not be a cause for worry.

"The mud does not bother me. I hope it does not bother you guys," Macias said.

The festival, he said, would be the same one that has been institutionalized in the province

the last few years, except that it has permanent structures and that it has been moved towards the end of the year to make it a three-in-one affair.

Aside from the Buglasan Festival, the province will also celebrate the Sayawit Festival and the 110th birthday of Negros Oriental on Jan. 1, which will be celebrated with a fireworks show at the Rizal Boulevard on Dec. 31.

Inmates' 'magic' toys lure Baguio folk

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—A HUGE LIGHT box at the doorsteps of the city jail has been drawing the curious to a small selection of parol (Christmas lanterns) strung up on a clothesline in the facility.

Prison officials put up these lanterns for sale every time the Yuletide sets in to benefit the inmates.

But it is the first time prison officials have decided to market the parol using the light box or improvised kinetoscope, a mechanical device that projects images in rapid fashion.

Few people walk through this part of town at night. But those who wander down this road witness a light show that features images of the Nov. 29 standoff at the Peninsula Manila.

The makeshift projector also casts the image of a cartoon of President Macapagal-Arroyo sitting with former President Joseph Estrada, whom she recently pardoned for plunder charges.

Beneath the images of the two leaders is an image of a tank barging through what appears to be hotel doors.

Felipe Bugho, known to inmates and jail guards here as the "Magician," said the cartoons were really meant to depict policemen barging through the Peninsula to arrest Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, one of the leaders in the standoff.

Bugho, a professional magician who has been jailed there for three years now, said the inmates were simply being naughty about this "social commentary" when they used this event as the subject of the

prison's first light show.

"The events occurring outside the jail are no longer healthy," he said.

But Bugho said all they thought of when they put together the makeshift kinetoscope was a marketing gimmick to help his fellow inmates earn income even from behind bars.

The annual sale of parol, earns them no more than spare change for the holidays, he said.

Instead of just marketing the lanterns, Bugho said he was hoping that the jail's unusual advertisement would end up attracting investors to toy designs that the inmates created this year.

"A popular fast food chain may find our toys a good investment. They can use these as giveaways," Bugho said.

The kinetoscope is but one of many tricks Bugho now plans to

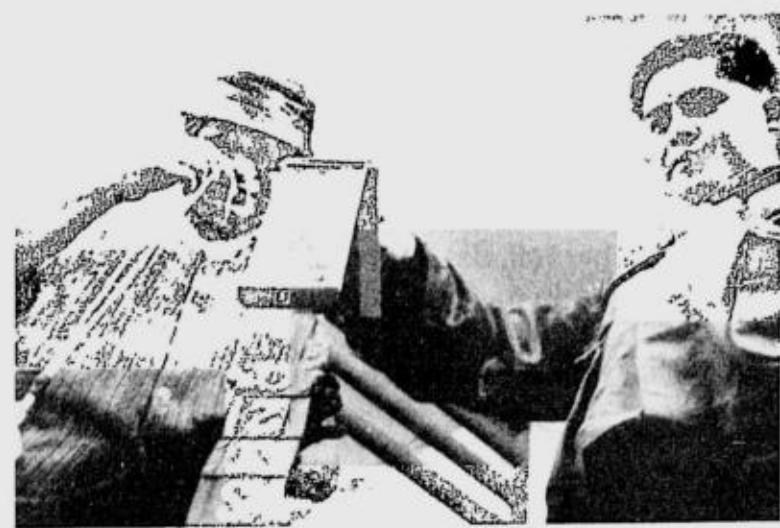
offer to investors to "improve our lives in jail."

This Leyte native said he had been touring the country since 1991, but it was while he was in prison that he thought his skills as a magician could be commercialized.

The projector was designed by Bugho and an inmate known only as the "Engineer." Assisted by three other inmates, Bugho salvaged raw iron, paper and cardboard from the jail's daily garbage so he could put together a small machine that makes the images cast by the kinetoscope rotate.

Bugho said he and another inmate "Banjo" pitched the concept to jail warden Miguel Cawi, who approved its installation at the facility's entrance.

"In the mornings, it looks like an ordinary per box. At night, it competes for attention with the lanterns and Christmas



A LIGHT BOX in front of the Baguio City Jail is drawing the curious to Felipe Bugho, an inmate dubbed the Magician, who has been trying to sell these toy prototypes to fastfood centers, for use as their routine movie.

VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

lights of City Hall [which is near the prison]," Bugho said.

He said investors who like this initiative should also look at their wares, including toys that could become Christmas

products next year.

Bugho cited a toy prototype he put together out of cardboard, which uses a magic technique that stage performers use to change the face of playing cards.

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NEWS

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Bill's author asked: Where's the money?

By Christian V. Esguerra

PROPOSERS OF THE LANDMARK CHEAPER MEDICINES Bill measure have been approached by some of their colleagues asking if they stand to receive a monetary incentive in return for supporting House Bill No. 2844.

"Many of them were sounding off, asking if something was in store for them," Iloilo Rep. Janette Garin, co-author of HB 2844, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Garin said some of those who had asked were probably looking at fellow

Iloilo Rep. Ferjanel Biron, principal author of the bill, as the possible source of incentive.

One of the wealthiest members of the House, Biron was said to have scored a coup with the inclusion of the highly contentious price regulatory

board in the final version of the bill.

His colleagues had shown a lot of discomfort with the board in the 13th Congress, fearing that it would defeat the purpose of a free market system. The board would put a ceiling on the prices of medicines sold in the Philippines.

Biron said he had heard about fellow congressmen supposedly expecting a reward for supporting his bill. But he said nobody had approached him since the bill was passed last week.

"To me, they're all rumors and I

don't know where they came from," he told the INQUIRER.

Hidden agenda

Biron said there was no logic in seeing the passage of the bill as his victory—and expecting an incentive afterward—because "everybody was also given the chance to talk" during the committee and plenary deliberations.

The so-called issue of personal victory apparently hinged on claims that Biron had a hidden agenda. He used to be identified with a local pharmaceutical company, but he insisted that he

had long divested his interest in it.

The House version included amendments to the Intellectual Property Code to allow the "parallel importation" of drugs sold at much lower prices abroad.

Critics said that with the measure seeking to dismantle the monopoly of giant multinational drug companies of the Philippine market, these companies' local counterparts would essentially benefit in the process.

Biron has insisted that local pharmaceutical companies would also be hit by the bill.



Price control just may kill medicine bill, advocates say

By Christian V. Esguerra

A HEALTH ADVOCACY GROUP HAS warned against a key provision in the Cheaper Medicines Bill, which seeks to create a body that would regulate drug prices in the country.

The KilosBayan para sa Kalusugan (KBK) said the planned drug price regulatory board in House Bill No. 2844 should be "transitory to about three to five years" with a membership chosen through an "independent selection process."

The group was apparently wary that the board would be "very vulnerable to corruption and politicking" if its members were selected solely by the President.

"We continuously challenge our lawmakers to ensure the accessibility of essential drugs to poor Filipinos over the business interests of (transnational companies)," Dr. Eleanor Jara, KBK spokesperson, said in a statement.

Empty promise

"Otherwise, the Cheaper Medicines Act of 2007 shall become an empty promise."

Panelists from the Senate and the House of Representatives are set to meet in a bicameral conference committee early next year to reconcile their respective versions of the Cheaper Medicines Bill.

Iloilo Rep. Ferjanel Biron, principal author of HB 2844 and a member of the panel, has said much of the debate will revolve around the price regulatory board, which is not found in Senate Bill No. 1658.

Sen. Mar Roxas, the measure's chief proponent in the upper chamber, has consistently opposed the idea.

One argument is that regulating drug prices will defeat the spirit of free trade, especially when other major industries are going the deregulation route. Another issue is the possibility of a regulatory board being easily manipulated—if not corrupted—by intense lobbying.

Under HB 2844, the board will be chaired by the health secretary or by his appointed undersecretary. The trade secretary or his appointed undersecretary will be the vice chair.

Members will include the director of the Bureau of Food and Drugs, president of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp., a member of the academe, and two consumer representatives. The last three members will be appointed by the President for a two-year term, based on the recommendation of the health secretary.

Parallel importation

The KBK welcomed the passage of the Cheaper Medicines Bill in both the Senate and the House, but expressed doubt that the measure would actually provide more affordable medicines to the predominantly poor Filipinos.

The group was not optimistic that the adoption of so-called "flexibilities" in the Doha Declaration on the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) would get the job done.

One such strategy is the parallel importation of drugs sold at much lower prices abroad than in the Philippines. HB 2844 allows the parallel importation of both patent and off-patent drugs to cover a wider variety of medicines used in the country.

"Mere policy adjustments or so-called flexibilities to TRIPS provisions will not, in any way, ensure that essential drugs will become accessible to the majority of poor Filipinos," Jara said.

But the group did not say exactly what strategy it thought would actually bring down the prices of medicines.

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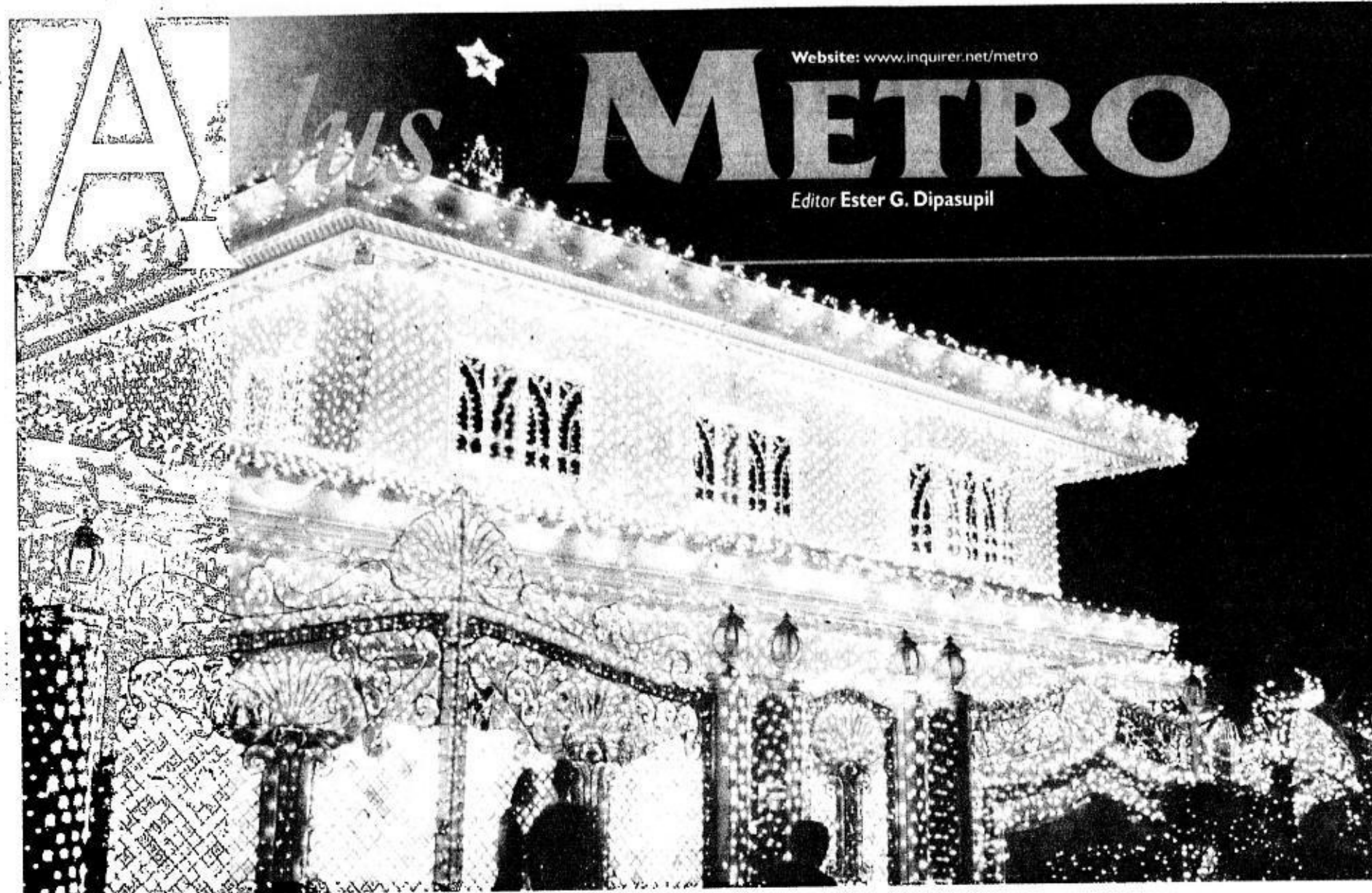
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METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT

The lights shine brightly on a house on Policarpo Street in Mandaluyong City, one of the few remaining houses that were decked out in Christmas decor this year.

NINO JESUS ORBETA

DID YOU KNOW

THE ARMED Forces of the Philippines, with headquarters in Quezon City, traces its origin to the army created in 1897 by the revolutionary government of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo. On Dec. 21, 1935, the National Defense Act (Commonwealth Act No. 1) created the Philippine Army, which later became the Armed Forces of the Philippines on Dec. 23, 1950. The AFP is now composed of the Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force and Philippine Navy.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

6 men in helmets rob QC restaurant

Customers also lose cash, valuables in afternoon heist

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A GROUP OF MEN WEARING MOTORCYCLE helmets walked into a packed Chinese restaurant in Quezon City at mid-afternoon yesterday and robbed the establishment and its customers.

The suspects first disarmed security guard Rexton Belinario of his .38 caliber service revolver before barging into the Chinatown's Best Food Restaurant at the corner of Banawe Avenue and Don Manuel Agreaga Street in Barangay Lourdes, Sta. Mesa Heights.

Belinario told investigators of the Quezon City Police District La Loma Station 1 that at 1:30 p.m. yesterday, four men wearing helmets on board two mo-

torcycles stopped in front of the restaurant.

The four then approached him, still wearing their helmets. Belinario told the police that although he found this odd, he did not give it any meaning until the four trained their guns on him and took his service firearm.

The suspects then barged inside the establishment while two other men, who appeared out of nowhere, acted as lookouts.

Two of the four suspects took the money from the cash register while the others robbed some 15 customers of their valuables.

One of the customers, a businessman who declined to give his name, said he lost approximately P300,000 worth of cash and jewelry to the thieves.

The robbers did not bother to go up to the second floor of the restaurant and immediately fled on board their motorcycles toward Del Monte Avenue.

QCPD cops immediately laid out dragnet operations for the suspects while investigators said they were still determining how much loot was taken by the robbers.

Makati to end trying year with big bash

By DJ Yap

IN THE SPIRIT OF FRESH BEGINNINGS after a trying year, the City of Makati will greet the arrival of 2008 with a New Year's countdown party in front of the Peninsula Manila.

At the stroke of midnight on Dec. 31, a spectacular fireworks display will highlight the dusk-till-dawn party at the corner of Ayala and Makati Avenues, city officials said.

"Makati is definitely bouncing back and remains as vibrant as ever," Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said.

"The New Year's Eve count-

down party is our way of saying that Makati is very optimistic about 2008," he added.

According to the mayor, the financial capital remains happy and hopeful about the new year despite the setbacks of 2007.

This year was particularly bad for the central business district, the site of two of the year's biggest headlines—the Glorietta 2 blast that killed 11 persons, and the takeover of the Peninsula by a group of recalcitrant junior officers.

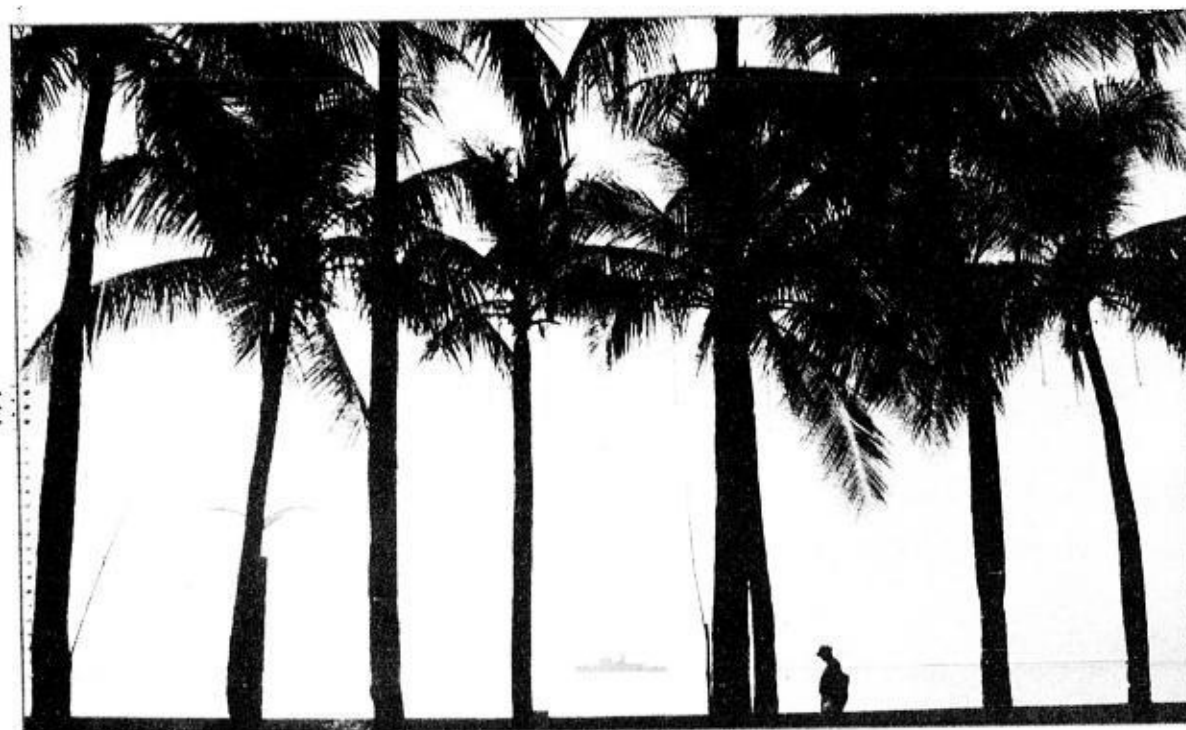
It was also in Makati where former Sen. Rene Saguisag figured in a fatal road crash that killed his wife, Dulce, and

seriously injured him and his driver, Felipe Calvario.

Such terrible news should not stop city dwellers from enjoying the arrival of the new year, Binay said.

"The New Year's Eve countdown is our way of celebrating and sharing love and joy with all of Makati, with the Filipino people and the rest of the world," he said.

The countdown will coincide with a night-long concert featuring top local acts, including Imago, Skarlet Swing Band, The Bloomfields, Itchyworms, Parokya ni Edgar and Kamikaze.



SOLITARY STROLLING

With most people doing some last minute Christmas shopping in department stores, a man has the Baywalk area on Roxas Boulevard all to himself.

NINO JESUS ORBETA

School comes to former worker's aid

By Santiago R. Alcantara

BARRING A MIRACLE, THE family of Rene A. Tero, who worked as a security guard of the Stella Maris College in Cubao, Quezon City, for 21 years, will probably spend the holidays in the hospital.

Tero, who underwent an operation for a brain tumor on Dec. 17, remains confined at the intensive care unit of the Philippine General Hospital on Taft Avenue, Manila.

"I'm hoping for a miracle because it will be a lonely Christmas and New Year at the hospital," his wife, Teresita, told the INQUIRER over the phone.

Tero, 58, was featured in August 1999 in an article which came out in Metro's Tales of the City. Written by former INQUIRER

reporter, now Hong Kong correspondent Blanche Rivera, the article described Tero, who was then working at the exclusive girls' school, as a "a babysitter, errand boy, barker and friend to the school's nearly 2,000 students."

Last September, her husband suddenly started complaining of recurring headaches, Teresita said. A CT scan would later reveal a brain tumor.

"The neurologist told us that the operation would require a lot of money," she said, adding that the P20,000 she had borrowed from the Social Security System did not even cover Tero's expenses for medicine.

But when news of her husband's condition reached the Franciscan sisters running Stel-

la Maris, they promptly came to the family's aid.

"Ma'am, just keep calm. We'll take care of everything," the school's directress told Teresita.

True enough, the school did not only shoulder the expenses for his hospitalization. It also sponsored a concert last week for the benefit of Tero who turned 58 years old last Nov. 2.

Teresita said she could not express how grateful she was for the school's help.

All that she is concerned about now is her husband's recovery. "I asked him after the operation, 'Pa, can you hear me?' He nodded. I told him to be strong, to pray to Mama Mary. He shed tears," she said.

(Those who want to help the Teros can call Sister Erlinda of Stella Maris at 9110151.)

Manila cops silence firearms, destroy toy guns

By Allison W. Lopez

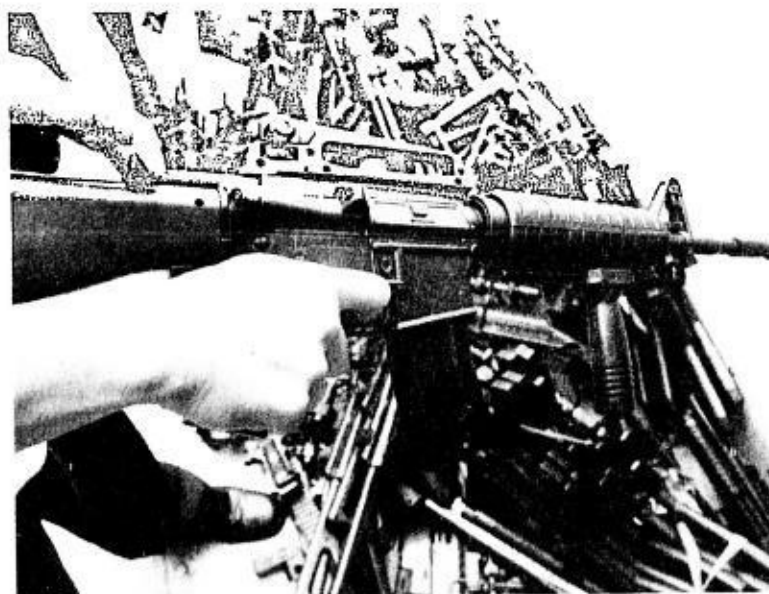
TO ENSURE THAT THE CELEBRATIONS during the holidays would be free of gunfire, policemen in Manila yesterday taped shut the barrels of their service firearms.

Mayor Alfredo Lim and Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, Manila Police District director, presided over the ceremonial muzzling of policemen's firearms as ordered by the Philippine National Police.

Rosales said the MPD was the first to comply with the directive which aims to prevent the police from indiscriminately firing their guns, particularly on New Year's Eve.

"We also want to assure the public that if there will be incidents of indiscriminate firing, definitely it did not come from police," he added.

Rosales urged Manila resi-



A POLICEMAN handles one of the toy guns that were seized from stores in Manila.

RAFFY LERMA

dents to report any violation of the PNP directive by sending a text message to 0918-4072792.

The police also destroyed 300 toy guns that were seized from stores in Ongpin, Quiapo and Divisoria.

Some of the toys were hammered flat while others were ran over by a police car.

"The guns look real, especially at night. When a toy gun is aimed at you during a holdup, you wouldn't know the difference. These toy guns are the same models used by the Special Weapons and Tactics team so it would be dangerous if these were to fall into the wrong hands," Rosales said.

The destroyed toy guns included shotguns, Berettas and Uzis.

Although he assured the public that the MPD was on full alert during the holiday season, Rosales called on residents to remain alert against threats of criminality and even terrorism.

He added that around 80 police cars will be patrolling the streets of Manila on Dec. 31, New Year's Eve.

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

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11:00, 1:30, 4:00
6:30, 9:00 PG-13

2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

10:30, 12:50, 3:10
5:30, 7:50, 10:10 GP

PROMENADE

a destination for all

NOW SHOWING

3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9

11:20, 2:10, 5:00
7:50, 10:35 GP

4 BAHAY KUBO

11:40, 2:25, 5:10
7:55, 10:35 GP

5 RESIKLO

10:30, 12:50, 3:10
5:30, 7:50, 10:10 GP

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MUSIC MUSEUM

December 28, 2007 Pooh 8:00 PM
January 24, 2008 Dancing with the Champions 2 8:00 PM
Feb. 6-9, 15-16, 2008 Siti, Rey Valera 8:00 PM
February 11, 2008 Kyla w/ Shamrock, Cueshe & Mojby 8:00 PM

TEATRO

December 28 & 29, 2007 Drag-Ons 10:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

Trader in critical condition after stabbing

By Julie M. Aurelio

A BUSINESSMAN REMAINS IN CRITICAL condition after he was stabbed several times by a neighbor who was being arrested Saturday night in Las Piñas City.

Eduardo Ocampo, 38, is now under observation at the Alabang Medical Center in Muntinlupa City.

The suspect, Gary Domingo, a resident of Hope Street in St. Joseph Subdivision, Almazan, immediately escaped after the incident.

According to investigator PO3 Ernesto Bautista Jr., the suspect caused a commotion near his house at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, prompting residents to call the police.

But as he was being arrested, Domingo pulled out a knife and stabbed three men, including Ocampo who was standing nearby.

The other victims were identified as Delfin Brocamonte Jr. and his father, Delfin Brocamonte Sr.

Bautista said they have already launched a hunt for the suspect.

Several minutes before Saturday's incident, another stabbing occurred, this time involving the drivers of a tricycle and a truck.

Bautista said the two drivers figured in a traffic altercation in Barangay Pamplona 3 in Las Piñas City at 7:45 p.m.

Jose Sonny Babon, 30, a tricycle driver who was allegedly drunk when the incident occurred, bumped into the truck being driven by Romeo Villanueva on Lotus Street.

Irrked, Babon attacked the victim with a knife, stabbing him several times. Bystanders rushed Villanueva to the Perpetual Medical Center on Alabang-Zapote Road where he is still under observation.

The suspect, on the other hand, was arrested after several hours by the police.

Police said they are preparing charges of frustrated homicide against Babon.



WISHING AND HOPING

A boy stares out of his house in Vitas, Tondo, perhaps wondering what gifts Santa will bring for him on Christmas Day. EDWIN BACASMAS

METROBRIEFS

P64,000 lost in store break-in

UNIDENTIFIED armed men stole over P60,000 worth of jewelry from a store at the Metrowalk Shopping Center in Pasig City at dawn yesterday. Senior Supt. Nilo de la Cruz, Eastern Police District chief, said the incident was reported by employees of the Jewelry Box store. According to a report by Supt. Eduardo Villena, the theft was discovered by Edward Pangillin, owner of the store located on the second floor of the shopping center. Pangillin told the police that when he checked the store at 3:50 a.m. yesterday, he found the store window broken. He said that the thieves had taken a Swarovski crystal necklace, a bracelet, a watch and two pairs of earrings worth P64,000. De la Cruz said investigators will check the footage taken by the shopping center's video camera to identify the suspects.

Kristine L. Alave

Driver of hijacked truck found

A DRIVER who was taken hostage by robbers who had hijacked his truck in Pangasinan was found in Valenzuela City yesterday morning. Senior Supt. Billy Beltran, Valenzuela police chief, said Manuel Guevarra, 49, an employee of Sansan Marketing of Urdaneta, Pangasinan, was found inside a van parked in Victoria Village, Canumay at 9:15 a.m. A security guard in the area heard someone screaming for help inside the van and called the police, Beltran added. Based on Guevarra's statement to the Valenzuela City police, he was driving a 12-wheel truck in Urdaneta, Pangasinan, and about to enter his firm's warehouse at around 2:30 a.m. Sunday when eight armed men on board two vehicles blocked his path. He said the suspects then boarded his truck which was loaded with diapers and took over the wheel. The robbers later transferred him to a van which drove around for what seemed like hours. Guevarra said he started screaming for help when he noticed that the vehicle had stopped moving.

Nancy Carvajal

Woman dies inside motel room

THE POLICE are investigating the death of a 74-year-old woman whose body was found inside a motel in Sta. Cruz, Manila. Fely Mallari was half-naked when a room boy of Dragon's Den Lodging Inn at 632 Trinidad St., Sta. Cruz, found her at 1:45 a.m. yesterday. PO2 Jay Santos of the Manila Police District homicide division said that Mallari, who had no known city address, and an unidentified man checked in at 11:45 p.m. Sunday. The room boy said he forced the door open after no one answered his knocks after several hours. Policemen said the victim bore no signs of external injuries and could have suffered a heart attack.

Allison W. Lopez

Jalosjos victim of a wishy-washy decision

CONVICTED CHILD RAPIST ROMEO Jalosjos could have been a victim of President Gloria's wishy-washy decision: "Yes" today, "no" tomorrow.

The President commuted Jalosjos' sentence from two life terms to 16 years, which made him eligible for release this month due to good behavior.

I'm sure she approved Jalosjos' release since he was once a political ally, and he favored her with a stay at his Dakak resort in Zamboanga del Norte.

But alas, public opinion was strongly against the child rapist's release so the President backed out.

She now makes it appear that officials at the Bureau of Corrections released him on their own.

What's wrong with GMA is that she lets her subordinates take the rap when things go wrong.

I should know. I fell victim to her kind of wishy-washy decision.

I hate to bring this up again, but this is for the benefit of those who hadn't read my past columns.

For two years, I tasted the ire of the President's husband, Mike Arroyo, af-

ter I exposed the smuggling activities of two siblings who were allegedly close to him.

I asked for the permission of the President to write about the two siblings' activities since it would surely hurt her husband. I did so as a friend of the Arroyos. Aling Gloria gave her go-signal, and so I did, which resulted in a Senate investigation.

But when Mike Arroyo got back at me with the fury of five typhoons, the President didn't pacify her husband.

When things go wrong, the President will dump her friends or subordinates like a hot potato in order to save her neck.

I'm taking up the cudgels for former radio commentator Alexander Adonis who is in jail after being convicted of libel.

There is no personal tiff between me and Davao City Rep. Prospero "Boy" Nograles who sent him to jail. Boy is related to me by affinity.

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



He is married to my second cousin, the former Rhodora "Bebet" Bendigo.

But I have to take a stand for a fellow journalist.

Adonis is a victim of a powerful individual who used his power to get back at his detractor.

Were it not for a twist of fate—somebody having an epiphany—I would surely have the same fate as Adonis.

All the libel cases filed against me, although they could have been dropped at the level of the prosecutor's office, were filed in court.

And the judges who handle the libel cases were all eager to please the powers that be.

Starting next year, I'm launching a crusade to have Adonis freed.

It's Adonis' misfortune to work for a radio station, Bombo Radyo, that didn't back him up when things went wrong. That's where Adonis and I differ.

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SAMALL OF ASIAMUSIC HALL, GAGANAPIN ANG
GRAND DRAW WITH BAND CONCERT



The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Victorious Thaksin allies set to form coalition gov't

BANGKOK — ALLIES OF ousted Thai premier Thaksin Shinawatra began hard bargaining Monday in a bid to form a coalition government after falling short of a majority in the first polls since last year's coup.

The generals who toppled Thaksin's twice-elected government have made little secret that they want to keep supporters of the exiled self-made billionaire out of power after trying for more than a year to erase his legacy.

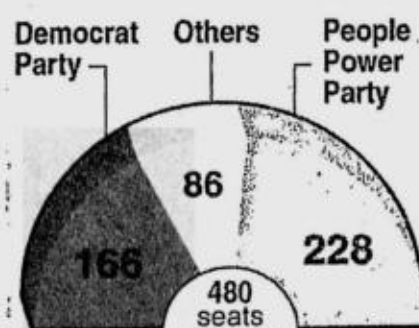
But the pro-Thaksin People Power Party (PPP) looked set to win 228 of the 480 parliament seats up for grabs in Sunday's election, according to unofficial results from the Election Commission.

The commission said voter turnout was about 70 percent, and a complete count of the ballots was expected later Monday.

PPP leader Samak Sundaravej declared late Sunday he would become the next prime minister "for sure," but his failure to win an absolute majority has forced it to woo small parties to set

Thailand vote

Situation at 1500 GMT Sunday
93% of votes counted



AFP 231207

up a new government.

"Now hard negotiations begin after the election. Although PPP is a top winner, it has to invite small parties to launch a coalition government," said Ukrist Pathmanand, a professor of political science.

"We are going to see intense negotiations between PPP and small parties," said Ukrist from Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

PPP's closest rival, the Democrat Party, was set to win 166 seats, with five

smaller parties dividing up the rest.

The Democrats' leader Abhisit Vejjajiva has refused to bow out, saying he was prepared to form a coalition government if the PPP fails to do so.

The result left the shape of the new government in the hands of five smaller parties, who are certain to face pressure from the royalist generals who ousted Thaksin.

Two of the minor parties—Chart Thai and Puea Pandin, which together have 65 seats—have discussed forming an alliance that could turn them into crucial power brokers.

But analysts said it was difficult to predict which way any of the minor parties were leaning.

Also hanging over the polls are a slate of fraud claims filed with the Election Commission.

If even a handful of them are found to have merit, authorities have 30 days to order by-elections that could shuffle the balance among the parties.

Despite the political jockeying, PPP's strength in the election was seen as a repudiation of the coup.

Thais "want to put the past 15 months of military rule behind them and turn back to the democratic path," the Bangkok Post said in an editorial. AFP

TSUNAMI MONUMENT

An Acehese child walks through a building crushed by a boat, which the Dec. 26, 2004, Asian tsunami deposited on the roof and which has been left in place in the rebuilt neighborhood as an informal monument in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

Saudi arrests 28 al-Qaida suspects over terror attack plot

RIYADH—SAUDI ARABIA ANNOUNCED on Sunday the arrest of 28 al-Qaida-linked suspects for planning attacks in the oil-rich kingdom, following an alleged plot to commit a "terrorist act" during the annual Muslim pilgrimage, or hajj.

"Since Dec. 14, 28 members of the deviant group (the term used by the Saudi authorities for al-Qaida) have been arrested, including one foreign resident and the rest Saudi nationals," an interior ministry official said in a statement carried by the official SPA news agency.

The statement said the suspects were "linked to elements abroad and were planning criminal acts in the kingdom," an expression Saudi authorities use to describe al-Qaida attacks.

The suspects were captured in the provinces of Mecca, Medina, Riyadh and the area around the kingdom's

northern borders, the statement said.

It added that it was in the "general interest" to withhold further details of the nature of the plots and the planned targets.

The Saudi authorities have been battling a wave of deadly violence waged by Islamist militants since 2003.

On Friday, the interior ministry said that security forces had arrested an al-Qaida-linked group planning a "terrorist act" during the hajj, which this year attracted about 2.5 million Muslims from across the globe.

The pan-Arab newspaper Al-Hayat reported on Saturday that seven non-Saudi Arabs had been arrested over the plot.

It said the arrests had not been announced earlier to avoid creating panic among the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to Islam's holiest sites in and around Mecca in western Saudi Arabia. AFP

US aid to Pakistan diverted, squandered, says NYT report

WASHINGTON—MORE THAN \$5 BILLION in US aid to Pakistan has often never reached the military units it was intended for to fight al-Qaida and the Taliban, and was instead diverted to other programs, the New York Times reported Monday.

Much of the money meant to reimburse frontline Pakistani units was channeled to weapons systems aimed at India and to pay inflated Pakistani reimbursement claims for fuel, ammunition and other costs, unnamed US government and military officials told the daily.

Pakistanis critical of President Pervez Musharraf said he used the reimbursements to prop up his government, and one European diplomat said the United States should have been

more careful with its money.

"I wonder if the Americans have been taken for a ride," said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Money intended to repay Pakistan for maintaining 100,000 troops in the restive tribal areas apparently does not reach the troops who need it, officials said.

"It is not making its way, for certain, we know, to the broader part of the armed forces which is carrying out the brunt of the operations on the border" with Afghanistan, a senior US military official told the Times.

Despite the vast funds flowing to Pakistan, a US official visiting the border recounted finding members of the

country's frontier corps "standing there in the snow in sandals."

Several soldiers were wearing World War I-era pith helmets and had battered Kalashnikov rifles with only 10 rounds of ammunition each, the official said.

The two countries have never forged clear strategic goals as to how the US military aid should be spent or how Pakistan could show it was meeting Washington's expectations, according to US and Pakistani officials.

US aid to Pakistan has come under scrutiny recently in the United States given the strength of al-Qaida and Taliban cells in Pakistan's northwestern tribal areas as well as the failure to secure the capture of Osama bin Laden. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

Turkey strikes Kurdish rebels

BAGHDAD—Turkish warplanes targeting Kurdish rebels bombed areas in northern Iraq on Sunday for the second day in a row but caused no casualties, an Iraqi Kurdish official said. Jabbar Yawar, spokesperson for the Iraqi Kurdish security forces, said the airstrikes in a deserted mountainous area in northern Iraq started at 3 p.m. and lasted for more than three hours. He said the only damage was to farmland. Reuters

India's Hindu nationalists win poll

NEW DELHI—Controversial Hindu nationalist party leader Narendra Modi swept back to power in India's religiously divided Gujarat state Sunday in what was called a national victory over the rival Congress Party. The Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 117 seats in the 182-member state legislature, leaving Congress trailing with just 59 seats, the commission said. Another six seats were picked up by small parties or independent candidates. AFP

Bahrain detains 39

MANAMA—Bahrain authorities are holding a total of 39 people picked up in police raids over the last three days following a week of antigovernment demonstrations, a local human rights group reported Sunday. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights produced a list of 39 people arrested by police since Thursday, including three picked up in raids in the early hours of the morning Sunday. AP

Suicide bomb kills 9 in Pakistan

PESHAWAR—A suicide bombing attack on a military convoy killed five civilians and four soldiers Sunday in troubled northwestern Pakistan, the army and police said. The attack also wounded 13 more civilians and 10 other soldiers in the town of Mangora in Swat district, where security forces have carried out several operations against followers of a pro-Taliban radical Islamic cleric, an army statement said. The "suicide bomber who was riding a vehicle blew himself up ... in Mingora," the statement said. AP

Indonesia tightens security

JAKARTA—More than 17,000 police and soldiers have been deployed in the Indonesian capital to guard against a repeat of Christmas Eve attacks seven years ago, when had been no intelligence reports of a possible attack by Islamic militants but police were taking no chances, Jakarta police spokesperson Ketut Untung Yoga Ana said on Monday. "We are anticipating any eventualities even though there are no indications of an attack," he said. Reuters

Corsica bombings injure 2

AJACCIO—Assailants set off two bombs nearly simultaneously in Corsica early Sunday, one of which injured two people at a military barracks, police officials said. The first explosion ripped into a government treasury office in the resort town of Ajaccio at about 5:30 a.m., the second at the barracks, blowing out windows at homes nearby and injuring an elderly woman and a 5-year-old child. AP

Nepal to abolish monarchy; rebels rejoin gov't

NEPAL'S ROYAL FAMILY

Nepal's government has agreed to abolish the centuries-old monarchy after next year's elections in a political deal with Maoist former rebels

- 1768-90 Gorkha kingdom conquers Kathmandu Valley
- 1846 Jang Bahadur Rana becomes prime minister and establishes hereditary rule
- 1951 Ranas overthrown. King Tribhuvan restored to throne. Constitution restored
- 1960 Political takeover of King Mahendra
- 1990 Constitutional monarchy re-introduced
- 1996 Maoists opposed to monarchy launch people's war
- 2001 Royal family decimated in massacre
- 2006 Government and Maoists sign peace accord

Population: 28,901,790 (July 2007 est.)
Area: 147,181 sq km
GDP per capita: \$1,500 (2006 est.)

King Gyanendra Proclaimed king after Crown Prince Dipendra, died of wounds received in the 2001 massacre

June 1, 2001: Royal family massacre

Note: main royal line shown

Killed June 1 Injured June 1

King MAHENDRA died 1972

King BIRENDRA died 2001

King GYANENDRA died 1950

Prince Dhirendra

Princess Shova

Queen Komal

Princess Prekshya

Kumar Mohan

King DIPENDRA died June 4

Crown Prince Paras

Princess Prearana

Kumar Gorakh

Sources: Brussels Almanac, CIA World Factbook

REUTERS

KATMANDU—NEPAL IS TO ABOLISH ITS monarchy after rebels Sunday agreed to rejoin the government in a deal to end the country's long-running peace deadlock, a senior minister said.

The ultra-leftists, who ended a decade-long insurgency late last year, stormed out of an interim government in September, complaining they were not being given equal representation in the peace process.

The new deal will see the government agree to declare the country a republic—a key Maoist demand.

"The Maoists have agreed to rejoin the government as we (the political parties) reached a 23-point agreement on major political issues today," Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat told AFP.

"The country will be declared a federal democratic republic in an interim constitution but we will implement the decision only after the constituent assembly elections," said Mahat, who belongs to the Nepali Congress, the largest party in the current government.

Earlier this month, the parties agreed to hold constituent assembly polls by mid-April next year, which has been postponed twice due to Maoist demands that the electoral system be reformed. AFP

Religion, health loom large in US election

WATERLOO, IOWA—WITH LESS than two weeks until Iowa kicks off the US presidential nomination battles, several contenders took their campaigns to church on Sunday and a leading Republican tried to allay concerns about his health.

Front-running Democrat Hillary Clinton, a New York senator seeking to be the first female president, won an effusive welcome at a mainly black Baptist church in snowy Waterloo, Iowa, where she criticized the Bush administration for failing

to expand health care coverage and alienating foreign allies.

"Do we take a leap of faith and once again bind the wounds of those who hurt, create a country that we're proud of, assume the leadership and moral authority of the world that we should or will we continue to just slowly but surely fall backward?" she said, also touching on the upcoming Christmas holiday.

Religion plays a big role in politics in the United States, where levels of belief and

church attendance are much higher than in Europe.

Other issues weighing on the minds of voters in the run-up to the November 2008 presidential election include health care, immigration, the war in Iraq and a mortgage crisis.

Clinton's main rival, Sen. Barack Obama, also toured Iowa, bolstered by a new poll showing him alongside her in New Hampshire—another early contest in the state-by-state process to nominate both parties' candidates for president.

Republican hopeful Rudy Giuliani, a survivor of prostate cancer, returned to the campaign trail in New Hampshire after being hospitalized overnight last week with what he said was a "headache worse than I've ever had."

"I feel great now, I feel terrific. I've been tested out, everything came back 100 percent," Giuliani, a former New York mayor, said on ABC News' "This Week" program, adding his doctor would address the episode after Christmas. Reuters



COMMUNICATIONS
INFORMATION

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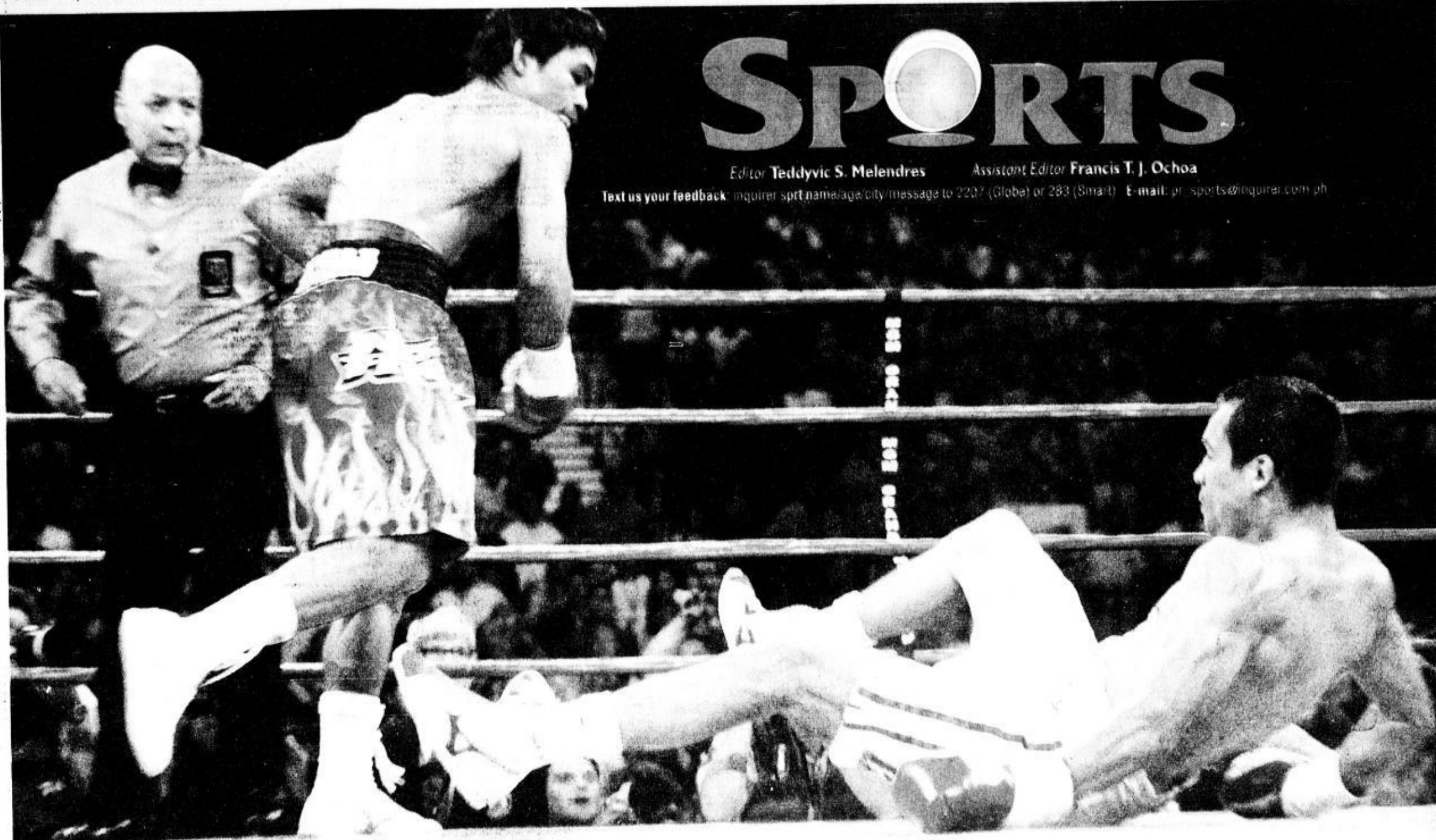
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Cartoons Betty Boop Bugs Bunny Felix the Cat Superman Tom and Jerry	Sports Badminton Basketball Boxing Golf Taekwondo	TV ABS-CBN GMA ANC DZMM Discovery Channel

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SMART
THE POWER TO LEAD



MEXICO'S Juan Manuel Marquez (right) says his rematch with Manny Pacquiao is "the most important fight of my life. On a scale of one to 10, the rematch with Manny is a 10-plus."

REUTERS

Pacman will pay, Marquez says

MEXICO CITY—WHILE BOXING SENSATION MANNY Pacquiao was enjoying his 29th birthday celebrations in the Philippines last week, his next opponent, Mexican champion Juan Manuel Marquez, began a grueling, three-month training regimen.

World Boxing Council (WBC) super featherweight champion Marquez, 34, is running 13 km a day and hitting the gym in workouts through Christmas and New Year in a long countdown to their much-anticipated rematch in Las Vegas on March 15.

Marquez's plans include running each weekend among extinct volcanoes perched above the Otomi high-altitude training center in Mexico.

Marquez, who last defended his WBC title on Nov. 3, by comprehensively outpointing American Rocky Juarez, already looks toned, lean and hungry.

"This is such a crucial fight for me, my family, the Mexican people and all my fans everywhere," Marquez told Reuters in an interview.

Marquez was limbering up and gracefully shadow-boxing at the small

Romanza gym in Mexico City, where photographs of greats such as Julio Cesar Chavez, Ricardo "Finito" Lopez, Daniel Zaragoza and Humberto Chiquita Gonzalez frown, grin and leer down on to the spit buckets, sweat-smeared punchbags and ring.

Marquez says he is only five pounds (2.27 kg) over his fighting weight and is determined to be in the best shape of his life to win what he terms "the most important fight of my life."

"On a scale of one to 10, the rematch with Manny is a 10-plus," he said.

Pacquiao is widely regarded as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world and enhanced his reputation with a one-sided victory over Marco Antonio Barerra of Mexico in October.

Both Marquez (48-3-1) and Pacquiao (45-3-2) see the bout at Man-



JUAN Manuel Marquez (left) has proven to be one tough hombre. Against Manny Pacquiao, he bravely got up from three knockdowns and survived a broken nose to forge a controversial draw in 2005.

AFP

delay Bay Hotel and Casino as overdue unfinished business.

When they first clashed in May 2004 for Marquez's then WBA and IBF featherweight titles, southpaw Pacquiao sent Marquez to the canvas three times in a brutal first round, courtesy of his jackhammer left hand.

Marquez, who suffered a broken

nose, bravely got back up each time, reverted to his natural counter-punching style and boxed brilliantly to salvage a savage 12-round draw. He still insists he won the last 10 rounds of the battle.

Money wrangles with Pacquiao delayed the rematch and Marquez, a trained accountant, agreed to take a

smaller share of the purse in order to get another crack at the Filipino, who was named the 2006 Boxing Writers' Association "Fighter of the Year."

Manager Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain has already lined up some southpaw sparring partners and Marquez says arrangements are being made to get former world champion Freddie Norwood from the United States to come to Mexico City. Norwood defeated Marquez on points in his first attempt to win the WBA featherweight title in 1999.

"I'm going to use a mixture of aggression, counter-punching, lateral movement but above all my intelligence as a boxer to defeat Manny," said Marquez.

"Manny is very strong but he's not technical. Manny doesn't like it when you go looking for the fight. He doesn't know how to back up. He's called a terminator of Mexican fighters but with me, no."

"I'm telling you again that I'm going to demonstrate who's better and I'll win this one. Then I'll be happy to give Manny a rematch but only if he accepts the smaller purse."

Reuters

EXPLOSIVE CHRISTMAS TWINBILL

Giants try to claim special holiday present

By Musong R. Castillo

PUREFOODS CERTAINLY COULDN'T ask for a better timing to try and pull this one off.

The Tender Juicy Giants, who have led the Smart PBA Philippine Cup since the start, try to gift themselves with the first automatic semifinal slot on Christmas Day when they slug it out with Barangay Ginebra today at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

With an 11-3 card and a full two games up on their closest pursuers, the Giants gun for the all-important victory at 5:30 p.m., just right after Red Bull tries to keep solo second spot in the 3 p.m. contest against Alaska.

The Giants opened up with a franchise-best 7-0 card and have won their last two games. They are heavily favored against the defending champion Gin Kings who are losers of their last two.

As things stand, even a loss will not take the Giants out of the lead, although it would give several teams a

chance to catch up for that important slot in the playoffs which would guarantee a team of a rest period of at least three weeks.

James Yap and Kerby Raymundo will remain the central figures of the Purefoods offense with help to come from streak-scoring Peter June Simon. Marc Pingris and Roger Yap will anchor the hard-nosed Purefoods defense.

Ginebra, meanwhile, played minus Mark Caguioa the last time out and the Kings would need a full roster just to be on equal footing with the Giants.

Jay-Jay Helterbrand and Eric Menk will lead the Kings, who won this tournament at the expense of Red Bull last year.

Only the top five teams after the elimination round will get outright

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	11	3
Red Bull	9	5
Sta. Lucia	9	6
Talk 'N Text	8	7
Magnolia	8	7
Alaska	8	7
Brgy Ginebra	6	8
Coca-Cola	6	9
Air21	6	9
Welcoat	3	12

GAMES TODAY (Araneta Coliseum)
3 p.m.—Red Bull vs Alaska
5:30 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Purefoods

slots in the playoffs, with the next three to slug it out in a wild card phase to determine the No. 6 qualifier that would join Nos. 3, 4 and 5.

There will be only one casualty after this round, and idle Welcoat is in danger of again getting the boot for the third straight tournament, running dead last with a 3-12 slate and at least two games behind ninth spot.

Red Bull, meanwhile, will be shooting for a win first and then hope for a Purefoods loss when the Barako tangle with the slumping Aces.

"I think that would be the most important game for us (in the drive for an outright semifinal slot)," Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao said Friday night after a victory over the Dragons. "(The result of) that (game) will more or less

tell us whether we will make it or not."

A loss could be critical for the Barako, since they will fall into a tie with the streaking Realtors and it could complicate matters in the end for both teams.

Red Bull has been the surprise package of the tournament, to say the least, making do with a lineup that got severely depleted by three lopsided trades last year involving its cornerstones.

But like the trademark of any Guiao team in the past, the Barako have managed to make things work, keeping their collective heads above water in a tournament littered by so many powerhouse teams which have, ironically, been the ones struggling.

Meanwhile, the PBA will open the gallery free to the public as its Christmas giveaway to its fans today. Raffle prizes will also be drawn during breaks in the game.

Television coverage of the games will start an hour after tip-off. The Games will be shown on a slightly delayed basis starting at 4:30 p.m.

WHAT'S INSIDE



Lakers nip Knicks as Kobe reaches NBA milestone /A24

ProGear Golf
#33 Upper Level, Goldcrest Building
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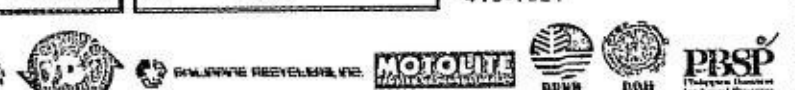
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GMA wants Cuban coaches for pugs

By June Navarro

AS THE BRIGHTEST GOLD-medal hope in the Olympics, boxing will enjoy the luxury of a pair of foreign coaches for next year's Summer Games in Beijing.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has instructed Olympic chief de mission Monico Puentevella to get the services of two Cuban boxing coaches as soon as the RP boxing training camp opens early next month in a determined bid to land the elusive Olympic gold.

"I was asked by the President if there is a foreign coach for boxing and I told her none," said Puentevella, the Bacolod lawmaker who is also the Philippine Olympic Committee vice president and weightlifting chief.

"She (Arroyo) immediately gave the directive to look for at least two Cuban coaches who could help our boxers just like when Onyok (Mansueto Velasco) won a (silver) medal in the Olympics," he added.

Molded by Cuban coach Raul Liranza as a world-class fighter, Ve-

lasco fought for the gold medal in the 1996 Atlanta Games but his Bulgarian opponent beat him to it.

Puentevella said he has to inform amateur boxing chief Manny Lopez about the Chief Executive's wish before scouting and hiring the two foreign coaches from the best boxing country in the world.

With the approval of the president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap), Puentevella said the government will spearhead the search for the coaches, whose budget will come from the P30 million Malacañang

has allocated for the Olympic campaign.

"The President is throwing her full support to this endeavor because she wants that elusive gold medal in Beijing," said Puentevella.

Aside from the P30-million Olympic war chest, the RP delegation to the quadrennial meet slated Aug. 8, 2008 will also enjoy financial backing from the private sector.

Telecommunications magnate Manny V. Pangilinan has already committed to support the training

of the boxers and the taekwondo-jins in a recent meeting with Puentevella.

Harry Tañamor is the first boxer to qualify for the Beijing Games but Lopez expects at least three more to clinch Olympic berths in another qualifying set on Jan. 27 in Bangkok.

Aside from Tañamor, taekwondo's Tshomlee Go and Mary Antoinette Rivero, swimming's Miguel Molina, JB Walsh, Daniel Coakley and Ryan Arabejo and archery's Mark Javier have also qualified to the Olympics.



TANAMOR

Viloria hits comeback road versus Colombian

FORMER WBC LIGHT FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION Brian "Hawaiian Fly" Viloria will return to the ring on Jan. 4 in Los Angeles.

Viloria will try to redeem himself with a 10-round bout against Colombian Jose Garcia Bernal which will open the televised bout on Telefutara that evening, according to Top Rank.

The 27-year-old Viloria, who is coming off two losses in his last three fights, is out to prove that he still has the desire and the hunger to fight against the elite in the flyweight and super flyweight division.

Viloria, once groomed by Top Rank to be the next big thing among smaller weight divisions, is hard-pressed to win this one as a loss would mean possible retirement for the former world amateur boxing champion, whose parents are Filipinos.

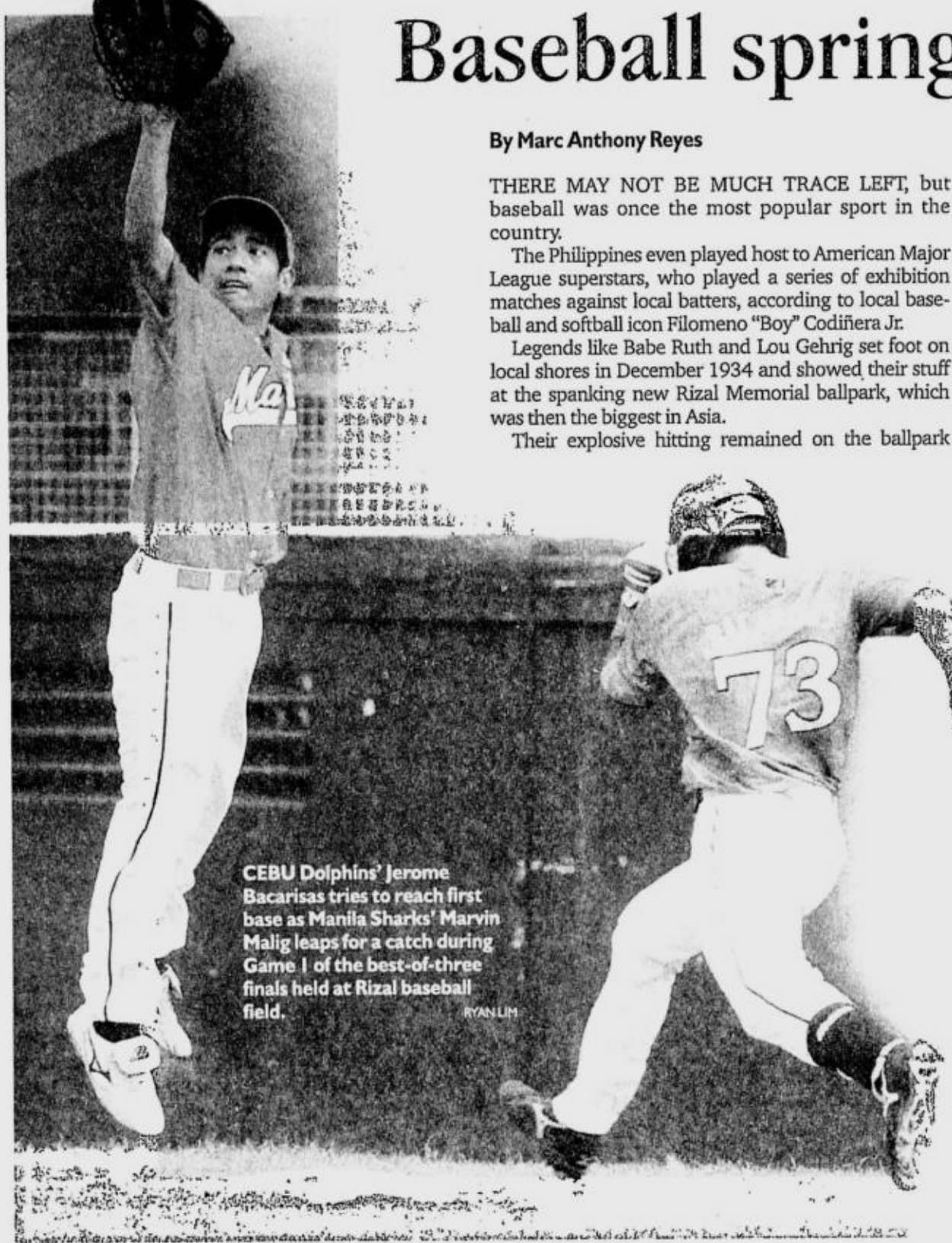
Bernal, a 37-year-old journeyman, should provide the necessary win for Viloria, although his record of 27-9-1, 18 KOs appears credible for a comeback opponent.

If victorious, Viloria wants to fight IBF flyweight king Nonito Donaire for a showdown between the former amateur rivals.

But Donaire, in recent interviews, had said Viloria has nothing on the table for him, and instead offered his brother Glenn to fight the Hawaii-based fighter instead.

"He should first pass through my brother before he can fight me," said Donaire.

Viloria lost by decision to Edgar Sosa last April in their fight for the WBC flyweight crown. *Salven Lagumbay, Contributor*



CEBU Dolphins' Jerome Bacarissas tries to reach first base as Manila Sharks' Marvin Maligno leaps for a catch during Game 1 of the best-of-three finals held at Rizal baseball field.

Baseball springs back to life

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THERE MAY NOT BE MUCH TRACE LEFT, but baseball was once the most popular sport in the country.

The Philippines even played host to American Major League superstars, who played a series of exhibition matches against local batters, according to local baseball and softball icon Filomeno "Boy" Codiñera Jr.

Legends like Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig set foot on local shores in December 1934 and showed their stuff at the spanking new Rizal Memorial ballpark, which was then the biggest in Asia.

Their explosive hitting remained on the ballpark

walls: first-ever home run, Gehrig, Dec. 2, 1934, on the right centerfield. third homer, Ruth, Dec. 3, 1934, far right field. Ruth's homer, as old reports claimed, even cleared the roof of the nearby Rizal Coliseum.

Codiñera, who eventually "lost" all his three sons to basketball including Hall of Famer Jerry Codiñera, claimed he was not even born then but "my father watched the games and told me stories of how big the crowd was."

Well the Rizal ballpark, said to be one of the only three existing venues where Ruth, also known as the Bambino, played, has obviously been better days.

This year a determined band of baseball lovers led by former basketball star Chito Loyzaga decided to put up a league in a bid to revive interest in the sport.

"We are taking it one step at a time, we need to invest on generating interest first before slowly bringing back the fame it used to have," Loyzaga told the INQUIRER between innings of the recent championship series between eventual titlist Cebu and Manila.

While entrance was free and shirts and hotdogs were raffled off during breaks, there was hardly anybody in the gallery during the first two tournaments of Baseball Philippines.

In fact, during Game 3 of the Series 2 title playoffs—played two days before Christmas—there were more people on the ground involved in the game than fans watching the action upstairs.

That just might change, according to Loyzaga who announced three innovations for next year.

First, there will be two teams coming in. Batangas has formalized its entry beginning with the summer series which starts March 23, while Olongapo-Subic has verbally committed to also field a team.

Loyzaga added that they are working on a TV coverage to reach a wider audience, unlike in the maiden season when the league had to rely on newspaper reports and—during the title series—radio feeds.

There will also be out-of-town games, in keeping with the league's thrust of propagating the sport.

"People are already talking to us, telling us we did well in baseball and volleyball," said Loyzaga, whose outfit also helped stage the Shakey's V-League. "Now they want us to help their sport form a league like what we did here."

He knows that it won't be a walk in the park but baseball is back in the sports pages and that's a big start.

IM Sevillano finishes 2nd in American Open chess

CEBUANO INTERNATIONAL MASTER Enrique Sevillano landed second to US Grandmaster Alex Yermolinsky in the American Open held in Los Angeles recently.

Sevillano, the former Asian junior champion who is now based in California, seized second on tiebreak over four others, including American GM Melikset Khachiyan.

They finished with 5.5 points each, trailing Yermolinsky, the US Open champion in 1993 and 1996, who posted 6.0 points from five wins and two draws.

Also with 5.5 points were former world junior champion IM Vinay Bhat, John Daniel Bryant and Eugene Yanayt.

Tied for seventh to eighth with 5.0 points each were Fide Master Alexander Kretchetiv, FM Eobby Adamson and Eric Hansen.

FM Harutyun Akopyan and Malcolm Trendenick tied for 10th and 11th with 4.5 points each.

Sevillano left the Philippines in 1993, one year after representing the country in the Manila Chess Olympiad. Marlon Bernardino

No money, no medals—Puentevella

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Inigo



THE COUNTRY'S EMBARRASSING sixth-place finish in the 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand is proof enough that there is no salvation for Philippine sports without government support.

Sports development is a primary responsibility of the government and that is why Congress created the Philippine Sports Commission in 1990. Through the years, however, the budget allotted for the PSC became a drop in the bucket compared with the huge allocations given to the other government departments like education, defense, environment and natural resources, public works, foreign affairs and justice.

"You want medals?" asked Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella, who was recently named chief of mission of the Philippine team to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. "The medals won't come if we don't have enough budget for training, the purchase of equipment, the construction of infrastructure, more foreign exposure and a genuine grassroots program." Even the basic needs of the

athletes like decent quarters and food and vitamins have often been neglected.

"No money, no medals. It's as simple as that," stressed Puentevella, who was also the chief of mission during the 24th SEA Games.

After the Philippines won the overall SEA Games title in 2005, the Bacolod solon said the PSC received a meager budget of P25 million—the lowest since 1990—as a reward to the victorious Filipino athletes. "This is adding insult to injury," lamented Puentevella, a former PSC commissioner.

The PSC budget has been dwindling dramatically. The agency operated on a budget of P107 million in 2004, which was a far cry from a budget of

more than P130 million in 2003. In 2005 the PSC operated on a budget of only P70 million, a sad reflection on the way sports is being treated poorly in this country.

"I don't know how we can win medals in the Olympic Games with this kind of treatment for sports development," said PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez, who was earlier directed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to "do everything to ensure that the country wins its first Olympic gold medal in Beijing in 2008."

FORMER Olympic shooter Tom Ong is recovering from a viral infection and should be up and about within the month. This I learned from his son, Spring Cooking Oil executive Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, also a multi-titled shooter like his dad.... Yeng Guirao, head coach of the Red Bull Barako, one of the most underrated teams in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup, is gunning for a semifinal slot against the Alaska Aces today at the Araneta Coliseum. In the other game, crowd favorite, Ginebra Kings take on the Purefoods TJ Giants.... It is not on-

ly bowling but also the other national sports associations that performed horrendously in the 24th SEAG that should undergo a total revamp. President Steve Hontiveros of the trouble-racked Philippine Bowling Congress said coaches Caloy de Leon, Jean Canaleta and battle-tested Madoka Amano are considered automatically resigned after the bowlers failed to win at least a single gold medal during the games. A longtime president of the PBC, Steve himself offered to quit "if someone is willing to take my place." The Philippines won four gold medals and six silvers during the 2005 SEA Games. And before I forget, I am sorry for missing the recent Christmas party of the Gilas-Sigla Therapy and Rehabilitation Center at the Constantino Convention Center in Marilao, Bulacan. Anyway, I am extending my holiday greetings to Marilao Mayor Peping Guillermo, vice mayor Tito Santiago, Dr. Cely Sy-Aguillera and, last but not the least, the efficient staff of Gilas-Sigla, among them Janice, Michelle, Ryan, Allan and Lawrence. Merry Christmas too, to Dr. Joseph M. Tovera of the PGH Cancer Institute.

Rizal Day Executive tilt up

THE NATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION of the Philippines will stage the Second Rizal Day Executive Chess Championship at the Luneta Chess Plaza on Sunday.

It will be held under the sponsorship of the Tagaytay City government headed by Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino, the NCFP's secretary general.

The seven-round Swiss tournament will have a time control of 25 minutes per game per player and will get under way after the 10 a.m. opening ceremony.

A P23,000 purse will be broken down as follows: first prize P7,000, second P5,000, third P3,000, fourth P2,000, and fifth to 10th, P1,000 each.

The first to third places will each get a trophy while the fourth to 10th finishers will each receive a medal.

Entry fee is P600 which will cover lunch. Participation in the event would be limited to the first 40 players.

For details, call 381-7224 or 09053269576, or e-mail NCFPsecretariat@yahoo.com. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

NBA AMBASSADOR: Jerome Williams (with necktie), community ambassador for NBA Cares, is welcomed by from (left) PBA officer-in-charge Sonny Barrios, Basketball Association of the Philippines and National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Prospero Pichay, Prisa president Dr. Emmanuel Angeles and David Ong, vice chair of the Federation of School Sports Association of the Philippines, during his recent visit to the country.



HAPEE VS HARBOUR CENTRE

History and a crown
await PBL champion

GAMES THURSDAY (Rizal Memorial Coliseum)
2 p.m.—San Mig Coffee vs Toyota Balintawak
(Knockout for 3rd)
4 p.m.—Hapee vs Harbour Centre
(Game 1-Finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

AS MUCH AS JUN NOEL WANTS TO distance himself from the piece of history fate has dangled in front of his team, the tantalizing prospect of forging the Philippine Basketball League's first perfect tournament is just too difficult to ignore.

The glamour of such a feat, in fact, has almost put in the shadows the fact

that Harbour Centre is also chasing a page in the record books.

And so this will be a PBL finals where the usual championship trophy comes with a historic shine to it.

Hapee Toothpaste stands on the cusp of immortality, a perfect season beckoning a team whose coach is trying desperately to shrug off suggestions that it can end a tournament unbeaten.

"Isa isa lang (Just one at a time)," said Hapee coach Jun Noel. He stands three games short of turning Hapee from just a brand and team name and into the greatest team in the league.

But the promise of a sweep is com-

ing, ironically, from the other side of the championship arena.

And Jorge Gallent, fetching inspiration from De La Salle's winning effort in the last UAAP, feels Batang Pier will be holding a fourth straight title at the end of it all.

"Hapee will be like UE, they'll lose two straight in the Finals; we're La Salle," said the Harbour Centre, referring to this year's collegiate wars where University of the East went 14-0 in the elimination round only to lose the UAAP title to La Salle, 2-0.

Stop Norwood

Gallent doesn't need to win every game in the finals to make things sad for Hapee. He needs to do just one thing: Take Gabe Norwood out of the picture.

"He helps his team a lot," said Gallent of the celebrated Fil-Am. "We have to minimize his assists and all the things he does good."

Simply stopping the production of the former George Mason U standout won't do. Norwood has effectively neutralized defensive schemes thrown at him by opting to run the team's plays instead of trying to help the Complete Protectors win by scoring.

And Hapee isn't a one-man show. Larry Rodriguez, Mark Borboran and Reed Juntilla all had a hand in helping the team stay undefeated up to this point.

A sweep of the finals—the Complete Protectors swept their elimination round head-to-head against the Batang Pier—will give them the PBL's first immaculate run to the title.

But again, Noel would rather not talk about it.

"Our team has its own goals and objectives," he said. "First was to play in the semifinals, then to play in the Finals, and we've achieved all of that."

And now we're focusing on Game 1. Ang ganda ng takbo (We're having a good run)."

That, of course, is an understatement.

The Complete Protectors have impressively displayed strength on both ends of the court in routing their foes and also the composure to wriggle out of tight matches.

"God has been good to us; we've been getting the breaks," said Noel.

The Batang Pier, who hold a 9-3 win-loss record, will head into the Finals with the games of La Salle stalwarts Rico Maierhofer and TY Tang peaking just at the right time.

Maierhofer and Tang are the two reasons why Gallent thinks this championship duel will go the way the UE-La Salle college tussle went.

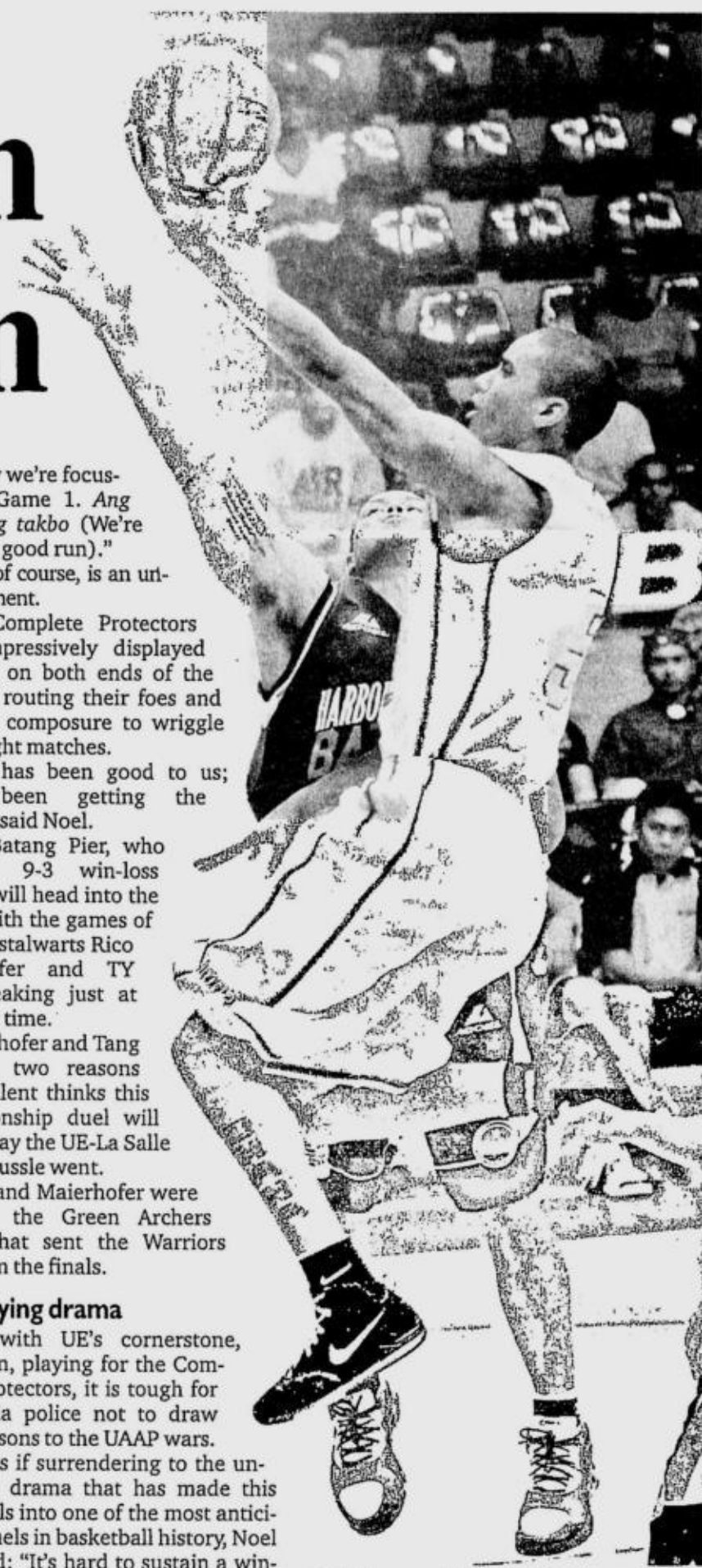
Tang and Maierhofer were part of the Green Archers squad that sent the Warriors reeling in the finals.

Underlying drama

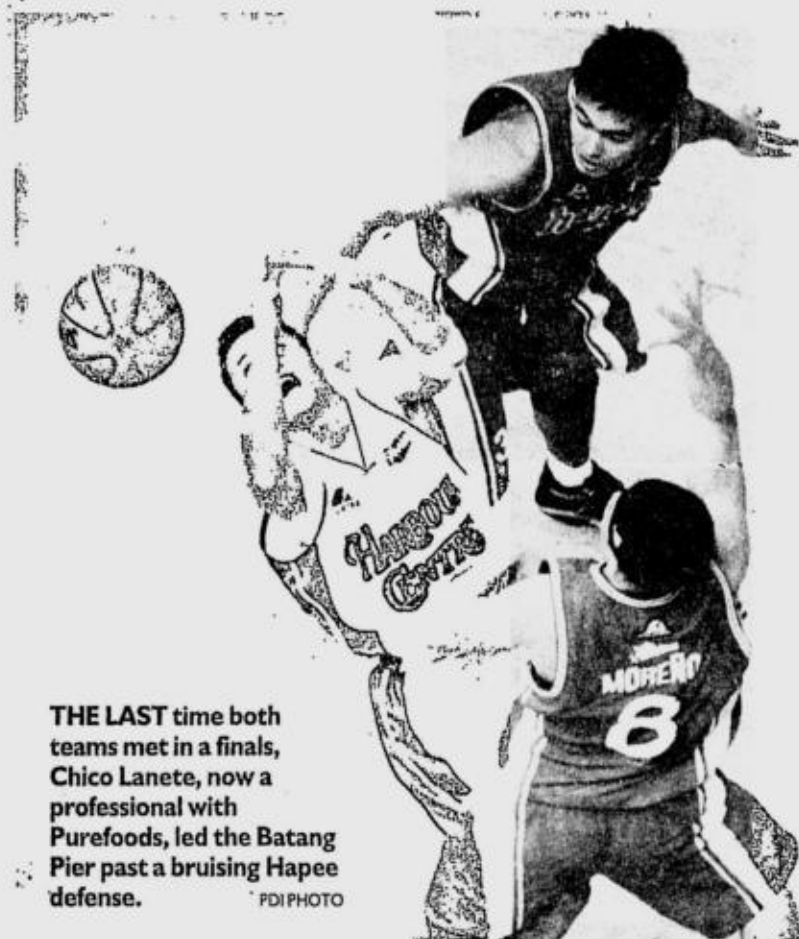
And with UE's cornerstone, Borboran, playing for the Complete Protectors, it is tough for the trivia police not to draw comparisons to the UAAP wars.

And as if surrendering to the underlying drama that has made this PBL finals into one of the most anticipated duels in basketball history, Noel admitted: "It's hard to sustain a winning game. There is pressure. Every game counts."

"But we'll just work hard and be ready," he added.



GABE Norwood (right) of Hapee goes up against Solomon Mercado of Harbour Centre. The two reprise their matchups, but with the stakes higher this time. PDI PHOTO



THE LAST time both teams met in a finals, Chico Lanete, now a professional with Purefoods, led the Batang Pier past a bruising Hapee defense. PDI PHOTO

With Grand Slam count hiked to 12, Federer owns 2007

LONDON—ROGER FEDERER AGAIN came close to winning the Grand Slam in 2007, reaching the final at all four major tournaments and winning three of them.

This year, however, the top-ranked Swiss also came tantalizingly close to losing his record 54-match winning streak on grass at Wimbledon, and then struggled a bit after winning the US Open.

Federer still ran his Grand Slam total to 12 by winning the Australian Open, Wimbledon and the US Open. He

could break Pete Sampras' all-time record of 14 in 2008.

"Every year brings new challenges, and I am proud that I have been able to raise the level of my game when needed," Federer said.

Justine Henin again dominated the women's tour, winning her third straight French Open and another US Open title. The Belgian finished off her record-breaking season with a 10th title at the Sony Ericsson Championships.

The Williams sisters also showed

they still can be a force, with Serena winning the Australian Open and Venus earning her fourth Wimbledon title.

Five-time Grand Slam champion Martina Hingis, however, retired from professional tennis again after being accused of testing positive for cocaine at Wimbledon. She denied it, but said she wouldn't fight the doping case.

The United States finally won its 32nd Davis Cup title, beating Russia at home for the Americans' first title since 1995.

In the Fed Cup, Russia won its third title in the last four years by beating Italy in the final.

Federer again started the season in dominating form, winning the Australian Open and beating nemesis Rafael Nadal at the Hamburg Masters to end the second-ranked Spaniard's record 81-match winning streak on clay.

But Nadal then won his third straight French Open title at Roland Garros, beating Federer in the final.

At Wimbledon, Nadal was forced to play day after day as rain plagued the

tournament. Federer, however, got a week's rest midway through the tournament because the rain and an opponent's withdrawal left him with no one to play.

Still, with Federer trying to match Bjorn Borg's streak of five straight titles at the All England Club, Nadal came on strong and pushed the final match to five sets before Federer was able to drop to his knees in victory—just like Borg used to do.

Federer went on to add Grand Slam title No. 12 at the US Open, beating Novak Djokovic in the final. AP

No slowing down
taekwondo's Go

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THOUGH HE STARTED YOUNG IN taekwondo, it wasn't until Tshomlee Go watched his elder brother Jefferthom compete on TV and read about his exploits that he decided to take the sport seriously.

That inspiration took the bullet-kicking 27-year-old to the Athens Olympics in 2004 and assured him of another stint in next year's Beijing Games. But that's getting ahead of the story.

Like most athletes, his parents were the driving force behind his journey to success. A black-belter himself and a Philippine Marine by profession, his father took the then 9-year-old to a summer clinic in Fort Bonifacio.

It was there that the skinny kid showed his natural flair for the sport. He went on to compete in age-group tournaments before winning his first ever gold medal while representing the National Capital Region in the Palarong Pambansa in 1998.

Jefferthom was in the national team that saw action in the Brunei Southeast Asian Games the following year. "I saw him on TV and read stories about him in the sports pages. I was inspired to do the same," Tshomlee recalled.

Go later gained twice as much fame as his brother starting with his bronze

medal in the 2000 US Open and a silver in the Hong Kong Asian Championships in the same year. He again bagged a silver in the 2001 World Cup, a bronze in the 2002 Busan Asian Games and another bronze in the Olympic qualifying for Athens 2004.

He lost his first match, by one point, in Athens after getting bracketed with top bets from the sports' superpowers. "I believed I could win (in Olympics) but I knew it would be very hard."

His daily regimen sounds more like torture. He does early morning runs around the Rizal Memorial track oval Monday to Friday followed by weight training and sparring until 8 a.m. After a short rest, he hits the bag at the Central Gym nearby.

He retires to his condominium unit near the RMSC then returns to the the Gym late in the afternoon to train with the rest of the national team.

"He's like a horse; very hardworking," said coach Rocky Samson.

During the Vietnam Asian qualifying for Beijing last month, Go still joined the team despite clinching an Olympic berth earlier in Manchester. He joined the workouts and would always take a few extra laps than what the coaches required during the morning jogs.

Because he remained in shape, it was no wonder that Go became the lone gold medalist for taekwondo in



"HE'S LIKE a horse," a coach says of Tshomlee Go (right). The willowy jin has competed in the Athens Olympics and in the 2006 Doha Asian Games, where he plants a kick on Korean Kim Ju Young. LYN RILLON

the recent Thailand SEA Games.

When not competing, Go works as coach for University of Santo Tomas, where he finished with a Physical Education degree. He also teaches young jins at the Malate Catholic School and

St. Mary's Academy.

"I always try to keep my cool and not worry about anything," said Go. "Master (Sung Chon) Hong once told me not to pressure myself, but always give it my best shot."

Real Madrid
moves seven
points clear

MADRID, SPAIN—JULIO BAPTISTA SCORED in the 36th minute to give Real Madrid a 1-0 victory over FC Barcelona, 1-0, in the Spanish league's classic derby.

The Brazil forward met Ruud van Nistelrooy's flicked-on pass with a right-footed shot that spun across goal and into the top right of net past Victor Valdes.

Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas thwarted several Barcelona scoring chances—including a hard shot by substitute Bojan Krkic in the 84th—but the Catalan club appeared lifeless without Argentine winger Lionel Messi, who was nursing a thigh injury.

"It wasn't Barcelona's night," manager Frank Rijkaard said. "We have to digest this loss and look to move forward."

With only its third victory at the Camp Nou in 24 years, Madrid moved seven points clear of second-placed Barcelona atop the table with 41 points as the league begins its two-week winter break.

"The fact that Barcelona didn't score at home says it all," Madrid manager Bernd Schuster said. "The seven points are an important advantage but it's still too early to talk about titles."

Elsewhere, Luis Garcia scored the winner in the 85th minute to rally Espanyol to a 2-1 win over nine-man Atletico Madrid.

The win moved Espanyol into third with 33 points, stretching its unbeaten streak to 13 games. Atletico has 31 points.

Nihat Kahveci scored to rally Villarreal for a 1-1 draw against Recreativo Huelva. AP

Lakers nip Knicks as Kobe reaches NBA milestone

NEW YORK—KOBE BRYANT SCORED 39 to become the youngest NBA player to reach 20,000 career points when the Los Angeles Lakers beat the New York Knicks, 95-90, on Sunday.

Bryant reached the milestone on a three-pointer with 11:08 left in the third quarter and finished the game with 20,019 career points.

He did it at 29 years, 122 days, surpassing NBA greats Wilt Chamberlain (29 years, 134 days) and Michael Jordan (29 years, 326 days).

"It is special to do it here," Bryant told reporters after connecting on 14 of 28 field goal attempts, including five of 12 three-pointers. He also had 11 rebounds and eight assists.

"The culture of basketball here, it is the Mecca, it is special to play in Madison Square Garden," Bryant added. "This is my favorite place to play."

He reached 20,000 points in 811 games to become the 31st NBA player to reach the mark. Chamberlain needed only 499 games.

The Lakers led 58-37 on Bryant's record-setting basket and eventually went ahead 65-41 on another Bryant three-pointer.

The Knicks roared back, cutting the deficit to a single point at 91-90 on David Lee's two free throws with 1:55 to play. But the next five points, and the game, belonged to the Lakers.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Richard

Hamilton scored 17 points and Antonio McDyess and Rasheed Wallace added double-doubles, helping the Detroit Pistons clobber the short-handed Houston Rockets, 94-82.

The Rockets started the night near full strength, but Tracy McGrady didn't come out for the second half after aggravating a sore knee, and Yao Ming missed most of the second half after needing four stitches to close a facial cut.

Detroit (20-7) has won five straight and 12 of 14, and joins Boston as the only teams with 20 victories. Houston has lost four of its last five.

In Boston, Paul Pierce had 24 points to lead four Celtics players who scored at least 20 points and the Celtics avenged its first loss of the season on Nov. 18 by beating the Orlando Magic, 103-91.

Rajon Rondo added 23 points and Ray Allen 22 for the Celtics (22-3), who have the best record in the NBA. Kevin Garnett had 21 points to go along with 12 rebounds.

In Cleveland, Stephen Jackson scored 29 points and Baron Davis added 27 to help Golden State hand Cleveland its 10th loss in 13 games, 105-96.

The Cavaliers fell to 12-16 despite 25 points from LeBron James.

In Sacramento, California, Linas Kleiza recovered the ball in a scramble and hit a jumper just before the final buzzer sounded, lifting the Denver



QUENTIN Richardson of the New York Knicks gets a hand on the shot of Kobe Bryant of the LA Lakers. But even his defense couldn't thwart Bryant's march to the record books—or the Lakers' trek to victory.

REUTERS

Nuggets to a thrilling 106-105 victory over the Kings.

The Kings kept giving Denver extra chances, like when Brad Miller bricked two free throws with 16.5 seconds left.

After Allen Iverson missed from close, Marcus Camby tipped the ball and Kleiza got possession and nailed the shot while falling away under pressure from the left wing.

Reuters, AP

Clemens repeats steroids denials

NEW YORK—ROGER CLEMENS POSTED A video repeating his denials of using performance enhancing drugs and will consent for an interview with a famous Sunday night television news magazine to answer questions about allegations against him in Major League Baseball's doping report.

The seven-time pitcher of the year award winner was accused in the "Mitchell Report" of using banned substances, an allegation made by his former exercise trainer.

In October last year, the Los Angeles Times reported Clemens was linked to doping in the May 2006 sworn statement of a federal agent who cited former MLB pitcher Jason Grimsley. At the time, the names of players in the public version had been redacted. When the full affidavit was unsealed Thursday, Clemens' name was not in it, and the paper issued a correction and an apology.

"I faced this last year when the LA Times reported that I used steroids. I said it was not true then, and now the whole world knows it's not true, now that that's come out," Clemens said in the video.

George Mitchell, a director of the Boston Red Sox and a former majority leader in the US Senate, wrote in his report that former Toronto and New York Yankees strength coach Brian McNamee said he injected Clemens with steroids in 1998 while he played with the Toronto Blue Jays, and in 2000 and 2001 while with the New York Yankees. McNamee also claimed he injected Clemens with human growth hormone in 2000.

"Let me be clear, the answer is no. I did not use steroids, or human growth hormone and I've never done so," Clemens said.

AP

Beautiful Mornings served daily.

Free newspaper at McDonalds

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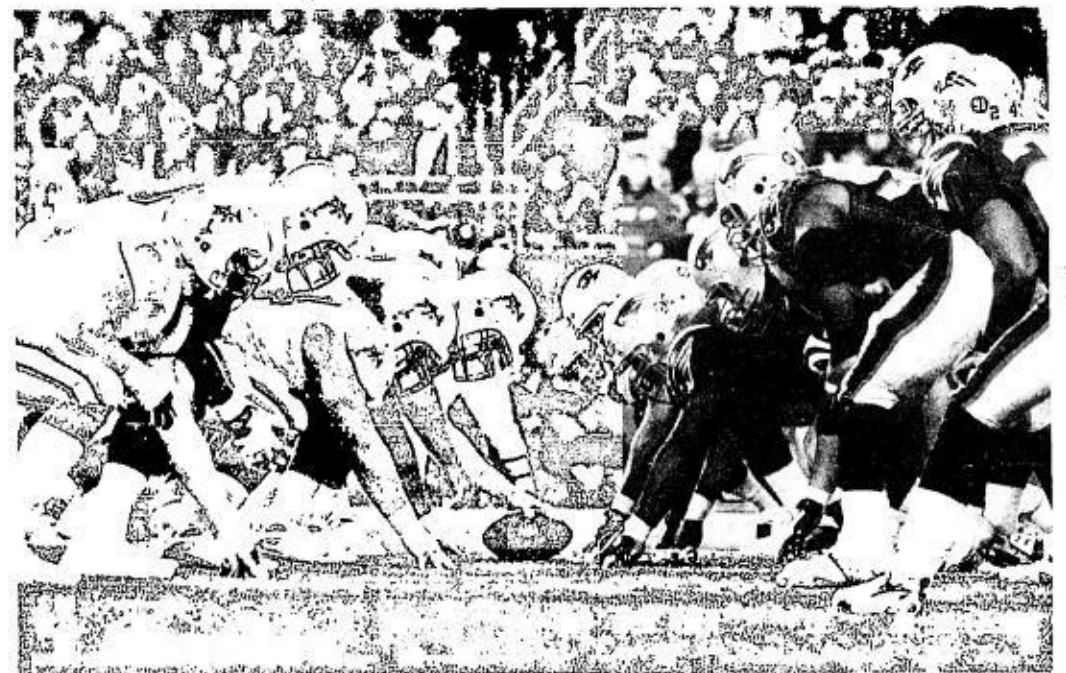
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THE NEW England Patriots defense lines up against the offense of the Miami Dolphins.

AFP

Hot Patriots crush Eagles, near perfect NFL season

BOSTON—THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS moved to within one game of a perfect regular season when they crushed the Miami Dolphins, 28-7, to become the first NFL team to go 15-0 on Sunday.

Tom Brady passed for three touchdowns, two of them going to Randy Moss, in the historic win.

"It's great to be 15-0," the New England quarterback, who completed 18 of 33 passes for 215 yards, told reporters.

"I thought it was a great first half and I thought we played really well. In the second half we just didn't execute very well, certainly not the way we wanted to."

The Patriots can join the 1972 Miami Dolphins as the only NFL teams to go undefeated in the regular season if they beat the New York Giants on Saturday.

"I think that would be a great accomplishment for this team," Brady said.

The Dolphins were 14-0 in 1972, six years before the NFL went to a 16-game schedule.

Miami was the last team to beat New England in the regular season, shutting out the Patriots 21-0 on Dec. 10, 2006 in Miami.

New England has since won 18 consecutive regular-season games, matching the league record of the 2003-2004 Patriots.

All of the Patriots' scoring came in the first half, which they led 28-0.

Moss caught passes of 11 and one yards to put New England ahead 14-0 against the Dolphins (1-14).

Laurence Maroney's 59-yard run made it 21-0 before Brady connected with Jabar Gaffney for a 48-yard TD pass.

The score gave the Patriots a record-breaking 71 touchdowns for the season. The 1984 Dolphins held the previous record of 70.

It was also Brady's 48th touchdown pass this season, one short of Peyton Manning's 2004 record.

Moss, with 21 TD receptions this year, is also one shy of the NFL record, set in 1987 by Jerry Rice.

Peyton Manning threw three touchdowns as the Indianapolis Colts topped a 38-15 home victory over the Houston Texans for their sixth win in a row.

Dallas Clark caught two TD passes, giving him 11 for the season. Manning was 28-of-35 for 311 yards in three quarters of play as the Colts improved to 13-2.

The Chicago Bears (6-9) stunned the Green Bay Packers for the second time this season, scoring a 35-7 home victory, with Green Bay's Brett Favre held without a TD pass.

Reuters

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'Sin tax' collections remain anemic

Total for first 10 months down 0.7% at P34.78B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S COLLECTION OF SO-CALLED "SIN taxes" remained anemic in the first 10 months of the year, registering a slight drop despite the increase in the tax rates.

ciency in collection. But the DOF said uncontrollable factors, such as manufacturers' move to frontload produc-

tion to avoid the higher excise tax rates that took effect in January, also contributed to the drop in collection.

A report by the Bureau of Internal Revenue showed that excise taxes collected from manufacturers of cigarettes and liquor amounted to P34.78 billion from January to October, down by 0.7 percent from P35.02 billion in the same period last year.

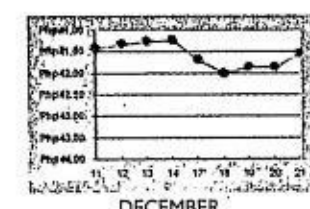
But for October alone, collection of excise taxes on cigarettes and liquor rose by 10.22 percent to P4.96 billion

from P4.5 billion in the same month last year. The year-on-year increase recorded in October, however, failed to offset the decline recorded in the first nine months.

The Department of Finance, head agency of the BIR, said the declining collection of excise tax on sin products stressed the need to improve effi-

SIN TAX/B2

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



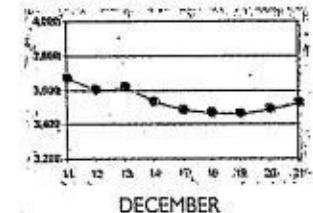
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 41.52 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 21, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Markets closed

FINANCIAL MARKETS REMAIN CLOSED due to the public holidays. Trading will resume tomorrow and traders expect thin volumes, with limited buying from institutional investors for the traditional window-dressing for the yearend.

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Philex acquires 46% stake in Canadian exploration firm /B2**

■ **Lower corn stocks, higher prices seen in Central Luzon B3**

■ **Alitalia picks Air France-KLM's 6.5-B euro rescue program /B4**

Christmas spending evolving toward 'more important' purchases

By Daxim L. Lucas

(Part 1 of 2)

A FEW YEARS AGO, THE HOLIDAY season would have meant lots of free time from work for John Victor Antonio.

His business, after all, is the real estate industry. Sales in this business are not known to be pronounced during Christmas, where most of the spending is instead channeled toward food and consumer items.

Not anymore.

"Christmas has become quite a busy time for us," he said in an interview. "More and more, we see clients buying property in December so we have had to adjust."

SPECIAL REPORT

Antonio is the chief operating officer of Century Properties Inc., a firm which has, of late, focused more and more of its selling effort toward the estimated 8 million expatriate Filipino community.

The reason for this is the sharp increase in recent years of remit-

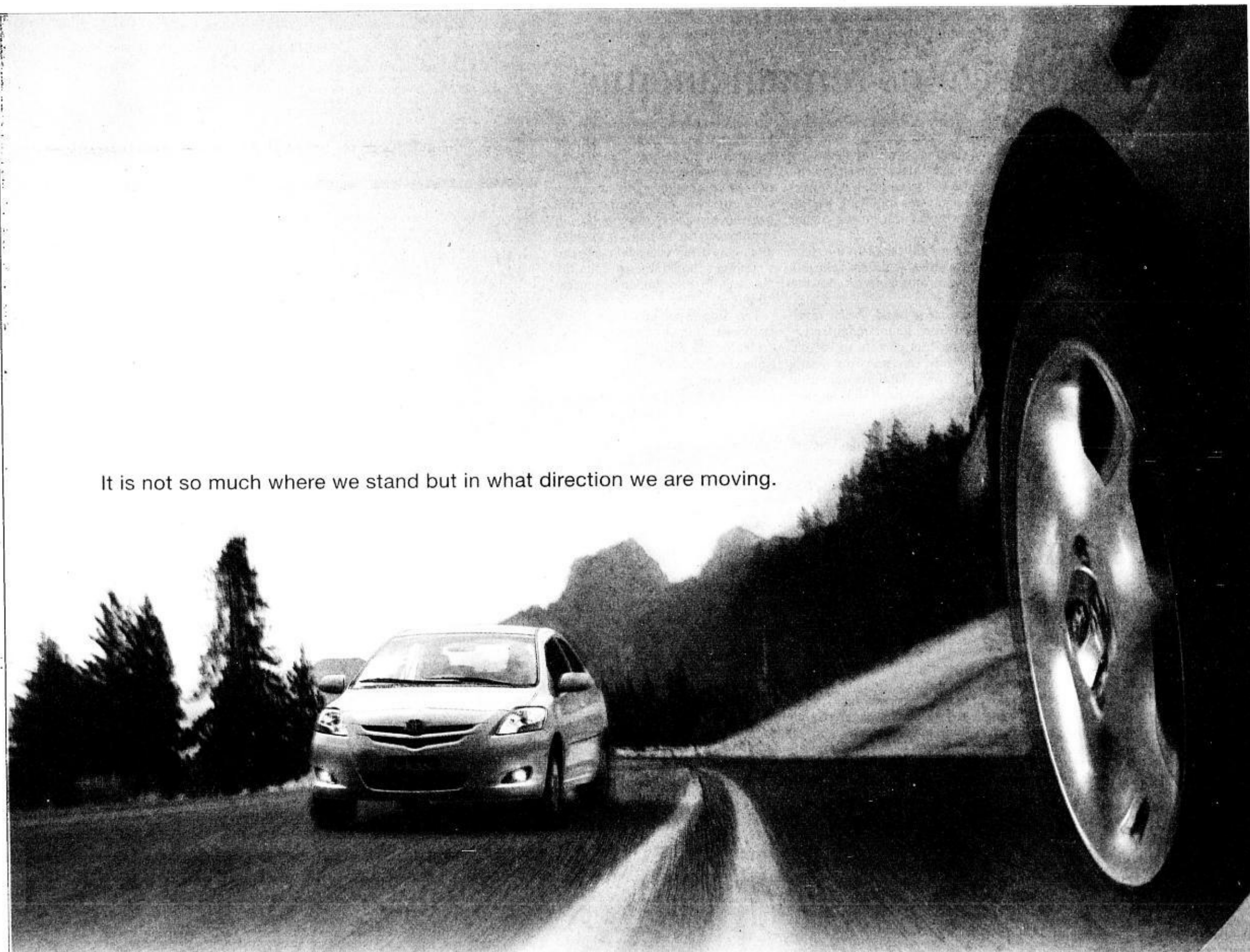
tances sent home by overseas Filipinos, which has boosted the local economy, encouraging spending not only on consumer goods but also on so-called "consumer durables" as well as investments.

According to Antonio, the propensity of expatriate Filipinos to spend either for themselves or their local relatives becomes even more pronounced when they visit the Philippines during the holidays as "balikbayan."

"From February to November,

CHRISTMAS/B2

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Philex acquires 46% stake in Canadian exploration firm

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PHILEX MINING CORP. IS DIVERSIFYING into new businesses after saying it has spent \$5 million to acquire a 46-percent stake in a Canadian company with oil and gas properties.

In a disclosure last Friday, Philex vice president for finance Renato Migrino said Philex Mining bought through a private placement 200 million shares of FEC Resources Inc., a Canadian company which holds a diverse portfolio of oil and gas properties in the Philippines.

FEC holds a 30.6-percent stake in Forum Energy Plc., a British oil, gas and coal company with a portfolio of projects in the country.

Forum Energy was established in April 2005 through the consolidation of the Philippine oil, gas and coal assets of FEC and Sterling En-

Targets oil, gas prospects in Philippines

ergy Plc of the United Kingdom into one corporate entity.

In April 2006, Forum Energy bought the oil and gas assets of the former Basic Consolidated Inc., now Basic Energy Corp., which included varying interests in nine offshore fields west of the Philippines.

Forum Energy, through wholly owned subsidiary Forum (GSEC 101) Ltd., also signed an agreement with Monte Oro Resources and Energy Inc. to assess the area covered by Geophysical Survey and Exploration Contract 101.

A GSEC is a prelude to a service contract, which allows exploration and drilling activities on oil and gas prospects.

Monte Oro, which is part of the consortium that won the recent bid for the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) power grid concession, is a privately held Philippine company formed in 2005 specifically to invest in mining, oil and gas and infrastructure investments. Monte Oro is chaired by Walter W. Brown, who is also chair of Philex Mining.

FEC is also Philex Mining's joint-venture partner, through Philex Gold Philippines Inc., in Lascogon Mining Corp. (which is undertaking the Lascogon gold project) where FEC holds a 40-percent stake.

The Lascogon gold project covers 2,306 hectares in Surigao del Norte, Mindanao.

EastWest Bank raising capital by P2.25B in '08, eyes IPO in '09

EASTWEST BANKING CORP., the banking arm of the Gotianun family's Filinvest Group, is considering an initial public offering in 2009.

Filinvest Development Corp. president Josephine Gotianun-Yap said the group was planning to increase the capitalization of the bank by P2.25 billion next year through a combination of equity and a tier 2 subordinated debt offer.

Tier 2 capital or a measure of a bank's financial strength may include undisclosed reserves, revaluation reserves, hybrid instruments and subordinated debt.

Out of the proposed increase, about P1.25 billion may comprise the tier 2 capital.

However, Gotianun declined to comment on the prospective size of the bank's IPO, saying it was still too early to determine this.

"EastWest is looking at that (possible IPO) but not next year. That's part of their program. Possibly two to three years down the road," Gotianun said.

EastWest Bank currently has a capital of P3.45 billion.

FDC, the publicly listed holding firm of the Gotianun family, earlier filed an application with the Secu-

ties and Exchange Commission (SEC) to issue up to 3.5 billion new and existing shares.

In a prospectus filed with the SEC, FDC said it would use the net proceeds estimated at P16 billion to fund, among others, the increase in capital of EastWest Bank and the possible acquisition of another bank.

For the nine-month period, EastWest Bank reported that net revenues grew 47 percent to P1.3 billion from P900 million in the same period last year due to higher automobile and credit card loans.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

'Sin tax' collections remain anemic

From page B1

Excise tax rates on cigarettes and alcohol were raised by an average of 8 percent this year in compliance with the Sin Tax Law of 2005, or RA 9334, which mandated a hike in the sin tax rates once every two years.

The drop in the collection of sin taxes was fully accounted for by the cigarette sector. BIR documents submitted to the DOF showed that collection of taxes from cigarette makers reached P19.56 billion in the first 10 months, down 10.3 percent from P21.8 billion in the same period last year.

The BIR earlier said some cigarette firms produced more-than-usual volumes of cigarettes late last year in anticipation of the

higher excise tax rates starting January this year. The tax-collecting agency also said the drop in the collection could mean some cigarette consumers were shifting to lower-priced cigarettes following the increase in prices due to the higher excise tax rates.

Cigarettes are classified into four price categories, and the applicable excise tax rate depends on the price.

On the other hand, excise taxes collected from liquor manufacturers rose by 15.1 percent to P15.22 billion from the previous year's P13.22 billion. Analysts said this showed that demand for alcohol products were less price elastic than demand for cigarettes.

Earlier, Internal Revenue Deputy Commissioner Nelson Aspe said the

BIR was preparing measures to plug leakages in the collection of sin taxes. One of these was to come up with a tax seal with additional security features to prevent falsification. Cigarettes that are withdrawn from factories are marked by a tax seal if appropriate excise taxes have been paid. However, Aspe said some unscrupulous manufacturers fake the tax seals to avoid paying accurate taxes.

The drop in the collection of sin taxes was one reason the BIR had a difficult time meeting its monthly collection targets.

From January to October, the BIR recorded a shortfall of P54.1 billion from its tax collection target for the period. The DOF admitted that the BIR was no longer expected to meet its full-year goal of P765.9 billion.

Christmas spending evolving toward 'more important' purchases

From page B1

our target is to build relationships with them," he said. "But from late November to January, our target is to actually sell because that's when they're all here."

Antonio points out that while Century Properties sells about 50 units a month from the February to November period, this number jumps to 70 units a month in December and January. Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have become so influential in the market that as much as two-thirds of Century Properties' sales are made to expatriate Filipinos, he said.

"We're very focused on OFWs, but we can see this phenomenon even with other companies where up to 30 percent of sales are made to this segment," Antonio said. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas,

which closely tracks where dollar remittances are used, agrees that the spending patterns have been changing of late.

"We see more people setting aside money for investments," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said in

an interview. "People's attitudes are changing."

He pointed out that while the beneficiaries of OFW remittances tended to splurge on consumer items in the past, evidence is emerging that a steadily growing percentage of

funds are being set aside for education, savings and investments, including investments in real estate.

More importantly, Guinigundo pointed out that spending on traditional big-ticket purchases have also declined.

"Spending on motor vehicles has come down, while spending for housing is always there," he said. "I guess people are beginning to understand that remittances will not be there forever."

(To be concluded)

CURRENCIES

December 21, 2007	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.698080	1.000000	41.7950
Japan	Yen	0.006173	0.008843	0.3696
United Kingdom	Pound	1.384363	1.983100	82.8837
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.089479	0.128179	5.3572
Switzerland	Franc	0.602676	0.863334	36.0830
Canada	Dollar	0.697453	0.999101	41.7574
Singapore	Dollar	0.478465	0.685401	28.6463
Australia	Dollar	0.599365	0.858590	35.8848
Bahrain	Dinar	1.859019	2.663045	111.3020
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.186155	0.266667	11.1453
Brunei	Dollar	0.476831	0.683060	28.5485
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000074	0.000106	0.0044
Thailand	Baht	0.022850	0.032733	1.3681
UAE	Dirham	0.190083	0.272294	11.3805
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.432500	59.8713
Korea	Won	0.000740	0.001060	0.0443
China	Yuan	0.094727	0.135696	5.6714
Denmark	Kroner	0.133999	0.191953	8.0227
India	Rupee	0.017713	0.025374	1.0605
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.208382	0.298507	12.4761
New Zealand	Dollar	0.528448	0.757002	31.6389
Sweden	Kroner	0.105760	0.151501	6.3320
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021495	0.030792	1.2870

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 20, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screens. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 20, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 21, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS							
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	30,000
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	59	60	59	60.5	10,012,800
748	544	China Banking Corp.	655	655	650	650	1,149,300
23.75	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.75	2,000
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	490,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	55.5	56	55	55	1,015,200
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	46.5	48	46.5	48	4,000
68	48	Philippine Savings Bank	59.5	60	59.5	60	3,000
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24	24	23.5	23.5	385,600
90	65	Security Bank Corp.	77	77	77	77	143,300
66	47	Union Bank of the Philippines	43	43.5	43	43	37,800
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS							
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.84	414,000
16.25	4.8	CitiseqOnline.com Inc.	10.5	11	10.5	11	626,900
43.5	29	First Metro Investment Corp.	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5	200
5.9	4.6	I-Remit Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.65	4.75	16,000
6.8	1.74	Makati Finance Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	1,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,615.00	1,615.00	1,615.00	1,615.00	10
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	932,000
1,390.00	272.5	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,015.00	1,025.00	1,015.00	1,020.00	8,950
1.94	1.3	Vantage Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	2,360,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER							
6.2	3.8	Abotiz Power Corp.	5	5.3	5	5.2	1,495,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	150,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	23,200
92	58	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	72.5	74	72.5	73	176,300
18.75	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	18.5	18.75	18.5	18.5	3,128,500
105.45	48.64	Manila Electric Co.	80	81.5	80	80.5	577,400
7.8	4.3	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	27,760,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.6	4,545,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.8	7	6.7	6.7	158,000
2.04	0.94	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	927,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO							
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.3	193,000
2.32	1.46	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.5	1.5	738,000
2.2	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.7	1.82	1.7	1.82	122,000
28.5	20	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	23	23	100,000
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	49.5	50	49.5	50	881,100
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	180,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	1,070,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. "A"	59.5	60.5	59.5	60	202,100
88	43	San Miguel Corp. "B"	60	61.5	60	61	493,200
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	988,300
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.37	80,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES							
6.1	2.65	EEL Corp.	4	4.1	4	4.1	225,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8	8	8	10,000
7	3.65	Republic Cement Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	250,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.97	530,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp.	8.8	8.9	8.8	8.9	11,000
CHEMICALS							
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.2	372,000
1.46	0.51	Mahuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.8	0.85	0.8	0.85	40,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES							
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	8.1	8.1	7.9	7.9	2,640,000
HOLDING FIRMS							
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.-PDR	34	34	34	34	140,400
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	11,020,000
0.185	0.0575	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.115	0.12	0.11	0.115	45,630,000
1.28	0.3	APC Group Inc.	0.59	0.62	0.59	0.59	6,380,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.38	2.46	2.38	2.46	93,000
3.7	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "B"	2.5	2.95	2.5	2.85	87,000
0.0182	0.0076	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.0095	0.011	0.0095	0.01	12,054,000
0.019	0.0085	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	72,000,000
9.7	5.8	Abotiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.9	7	6.8	6.8	2,148,000
0.021	0.01	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	30,800,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.5	5.1	5.3	5,468,000
1.38	0.61	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	60,000
2.9	1.04	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.34	2.36	2.32	2.34	744,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	505	515	505	510	109,190
15.25	7.83	Bancord Consolidated Industries Inc.	13	13	13	13	1,500
5.8	2.14	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.65	35,895,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.3	9.7	9.3	9.6	360,000
2.5	0.85	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A"	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	30,000
8	3.5	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	25,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	180,000
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.6	1.6	210,000
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	16	17	16	16.25	16,500
0.8	0.24	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.54	0.6	0.54	0.6	20,000
11.5	1.5	Mineral Resources Corp.	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.2	645,000
8.5	3.1	PAL Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	4,000
0.28	0.016	Pacific Inc. "A"	0.205	0.21	0.2	0.205	34,490,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.51	0.53	0.51	0.53	1,480,000
2.1	1.3	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	20,000
452.5	292.51	SM Investments Corp.	340	350	340	340	22,880
2.1	1.08	Seafrost Resources Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	334,000
0.73	0.155	Sinopharm Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	500,000
1.06	0.61	Solid Group Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.69	0.69	500,000
2.9	0.93	Vivant Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	20,000
0.75	0.12	Weller Industries Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	150,000
PROPERTY							
2.38	1	A Brown Co. Inc.	2.1	2.14	2.02	2.04	3,791,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	7,000
1.06	0.4	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	60,000
19.25	12.08	Ayala Land Inc.	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.25	9,275,600
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,010,000
2.7	1.25	Cityland Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	30,000
0.86	0.4	Crown Equities Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	100,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	3,100,000
1.05	0.56	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	2,550,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.22	2,730,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.94	0.96	0.94	0.95	9,130,000
2.44	1.22	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.38	1.34	1.34	1,886,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.53	310,000
4.6	2.24	Megaworld Corp.	3.85	4	3.85	3.95	23,216,000
6.4	3.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4	4.25	4	4	109,000
0.7	0.15	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.3	0.34	0.3	0.34	70,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.5	0.47	0.47	5,680,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	20,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	16	16	16	16	2,403,000
5.9	2.08	SM Development Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.75	1,308,000
13.5	8	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	4,440,800
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.18	2.2	608,000
1.34	0.46	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.64	1.64	1,000,000
1.3	0.44	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.58	520,000
0.49	0.0975	Unwired Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	10,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifestyles Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.8	1,554,000
MEDIA							
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	33	33	33	33	13,000
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.9	8	3,476,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.7	615,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS							
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.62	1.66	1.6	1.64	8,160,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,485.00	1,515.00	1,485.00	1,510.00	59,600
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,020.00	3,040.00	3,020.00	3,030.00	101,710
8.1	5.5	Philpino Telephone Corp.	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.3	5,952,000
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY							
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	400,000
16.5	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	15.25	15.25	14.75	15	465,300
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.3	338,000
0.065	0.027	ISPM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.036	23,600,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	3	3	3	3	12,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	200,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	2,510,000
2.25	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.9	1.94	1.9	1.9	298,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.044	0.045	0.044	0.045	88,800,000
4.7	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc.	2.34	2.42	2.34	2.34	1,485,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES							
49	19	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	44	44	43.5	43.5	143,000
2.3	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	2.2	2.22	2.2	2.2	836,000
HOTEL & LEISURE							
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.32	2.36	2.3	2.36	490,000
1.52	0.33	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.2	2,331,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.8	0.81	0.8	0.81	100,000
EDUCATION							
950	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	805	805	805	805	90
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.15	117,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES							
6.14	0.94	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.6	29,000
6	2.04	MacroAsia Corp.	4.75	4.75	4.7	4.7	102,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10.25	250,100
30	5.3	Paxys Inc.	6	6.2	5.9	6.2	583,000
472.5	350	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	380	385	380	385	2,570
MINING							
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	28,000,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	115,000
7.4	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	59,000
21.25	8.1	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13.25	13.5	13	13.5	401,000
20.75	8.9	Benguet Corp.	8	19	18.75	18.75	96,800
12.75	2.18	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.2	8.3	355,000
3.1	0.6	GEORACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.78	1.8	11,912,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.49	0.49	0.46	0.46	11,330,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.5	0.5	0.47	0.48	19,740,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	21,100,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	53,000,000
30	3.6	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	19	19.5	18.5	18.75	123,100
0.021	0.01	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	63,800,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp.-Warrants	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	24,000,000
3.3	3	Orient Petroleum Resources Group Inc.	3.2	3.25	3.1	3.25	20,543,000
11.25	3.5	Philrex Mining Corp.	9.4	9.4	9.1	9.1	8,694,000
1.75	0.9						

Lower corn stocks, higher prices seen in Central Luzon

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—PLANTING OF yellow corn has been delayed by two months now in four Central Luzon provinces, according to an official of the Department of Agriculture in the region.

The late planting of corn in at least 5,000 hectares of farmland is expected to result in lower corn feed stocks and higher prices in the first three months of 2008, said Edwin Paningbatan, regional corn program coordinator of the DA.

The delay in production would reduce the expected first quarter output of 103,577 metric tons by at least 25,000 MT, he said.

Frequent and heavy rains in the corn-producing provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija and Aurora caused farmers to postpone planting, Paningbatan said.

It was reported that the crops had been planted in some 10,000 hectares as of last week.

The DA gave no estimates of price increases in the next few months. A kilogram of whole kernel fetched P13 as of Nov. 28.

A number of farmers also deferred planting in 2006 and what tided the poultry and livestock industry in the region was the use of feed wheat, an imported substitute.

Corn did not become scarce though that year because the demand decreased as the swine influenza mildly affected the region's hog industry, Paningbatan said.

The last quarter of every year is Central Luzon's biggest corn growing period. The region is expected to produce 187,895 MT of corn in 2008.

Less than 40 percent of that yield will come from Tarlac, which has become the biggest corn-producing province in the region as farmers weaned away from sugarcane planting following the agrarian and labor strike at Hacienda Luisita.

Korea to draw up \$2-M master plan for Clark airport dev't

CLARK FREEPORT—A \$2-MILLION MASTER plan for the "holistic development" of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport here will be prepared by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica).

Officials of the state-owned Clark International Airport Corp. announced Koica's undertaking following the recent signing of an agreement in Malacañang.

On behalf of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita witnessed the signing of the records of discussions between CIAC president and chief executive officer Victor Jose Luciano and Koica resident representative Kim In.

Luciano said Koica has approved a technical grant of \$2 million for feasibility studies on Phase I of the DMIA master plan and its logistics facilities, runway extension, ground transport center and international gateway terminal.

He said the project aims to "contribute to the development of the DMIA and improve airport-related technology in the Philippines through technology transfer of Korea's airport development expertise."

At the same time, this will strengthen the relationship and cooperation between the two countries through the successful implementation of the project, Luciano said.

"This project, along with the expansion of the DMIA passenger terminal to 10 million annual capacity, is in preparation for the full liberalization of air travel in the region by December 2008," he said.

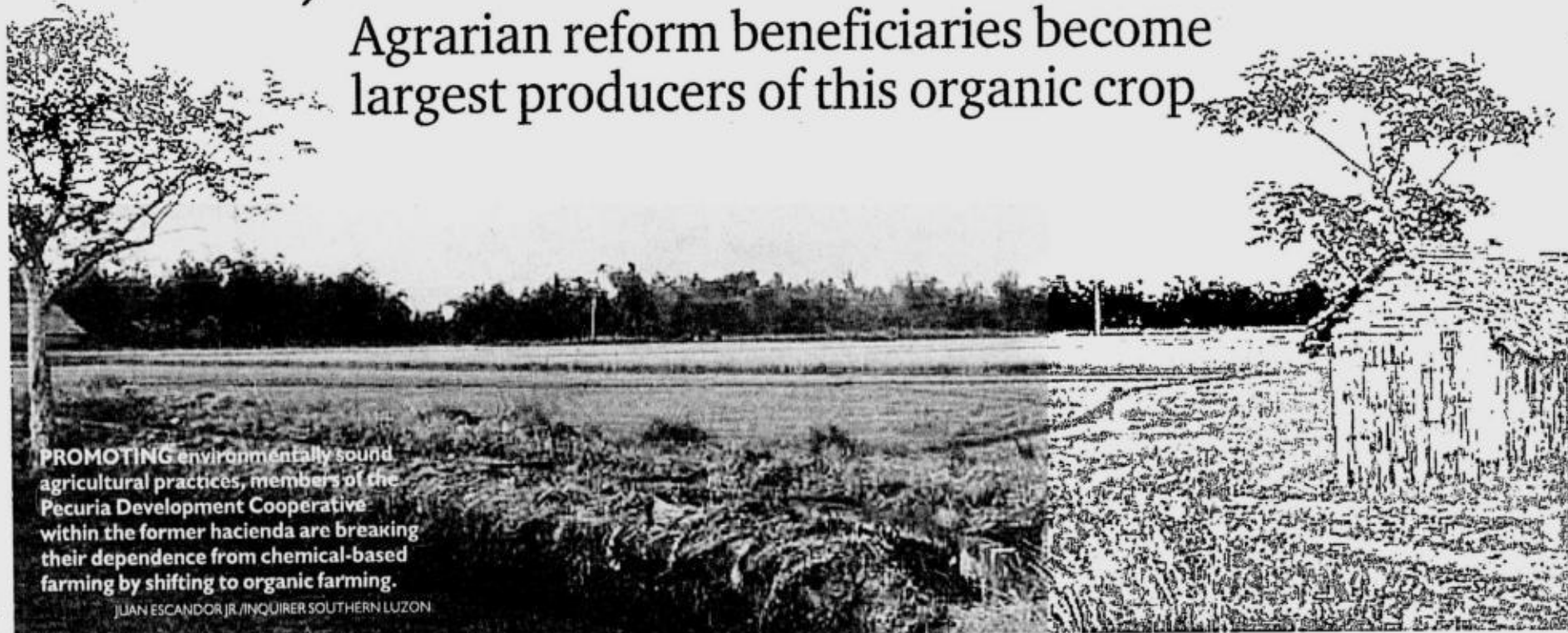
The Arroyo administration has been pouring more resources and support services to the DMIA since 2001 to turn the former United States military airport into the country's premier airport as well as a logistics hub in the Asia-Pacific, Luciano added. **Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon**



ERMITA

Red, red rice for health buffs

Agrarian reform beneficiaries become largest producers of this organic crop



PROMOTING environmentally sound agricultural practices, members of the Pecuria Development Cooperative within the former hacienda are breaking their dependence from chemical-based farming by shifting to organic farming.

JUAN ESCANDOR JR./INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Text and photos by Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BULA, CAMARINES SUR—A FARMERS' cooperative working on a 187-hectare hacienda here has come a long way to become the largest single producer of organic red rice in Bicol.

It took 12 years before the Pecuria Development Cooperative Inc. (PDCI) was able to create a niche in the fast-growing organic food industry.

The cooperative, which consists of 426 agrarian reform beneficiaries of the hacienda, advocates and practices agricultural technologies aimed at "reconstructing and restoring the ecological resource base."

PDCI was at first organized as a people's organization on April 5, 1991 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as People's Coalition for Unity and Agrarian Reform Integration and Action (Pecuria).

Chiefly composed of farmers, Pecuria was mainly created to resolve conflicting interests and issues regarding the 187-hectare hacienda.

Five months later, the general assembly turned Pecuria into a cooperative and registered it with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).

Once owned and managed by Don Severo Arroyo Tuazon and Co. and Mrs. Teresa Tuazon de Gonzales Lao and Co. Inc., the 187-hectare hacienda started to operate as an animal farm in 1952.

The owners, however, were forced to stop its activities in 1985, supposedly because of threats and harassment from insurgents.

For 33 years, the animal farm under the name Union Agrícola y Pecuaría del Sur de Luzon, or Pecuaría, was producing cattle, hogs and fowls.

Juan Jollado Jr., former chair and now the cooperative secretary, said the PDCI managed to survive its tumultuous beginnings.

He was grateful to the entry of the Camarines Sur Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CSPARRD) that helped diffuse tension in the late 1980s to 1990s.

Using a tripartite body called "peace council," the CSPARRD helped resolve issues and problems that bugged the implementation of the agrarian reform program inside the hacienda.

Jollado said the trading and marketing program started to thrive as soon as PDCI bounced back from the factional-



GENERAL manager Miller Bicaldo inspects organic palay stocks ready for drying and milling.

ism and internal power struggle that hounded the co-op for years.

Earnings

According to Jollado, PDCI made its first P100,000 in organic rice trading and marketing in 2003.

Except for last year when supertyphoons devastated Bicol, the net earnings of PDCI have since grown to millions of pesos.

In 2006, PDCI's net earnings from organic rice trading and marketing was P600,000 while earnings from 2004 and 2005 were P1.5 million and P2.5 million, respectively.

Now in its fourth year of gainful operation, PDCI specializes in organic red rice production that it markets to Metro Manila and sells under the label "Healthy Rice" in 150 outlets in malls and department stores.

Miller Bicaldo, 51, general manager, said that with increasing market demand, trading and marketing of organic rice has become lucrative.

Bicaldo estimated that this month PDCI is already nearing P8 million in sales of organic red rice while another P2 million sales is generated from organic fertilizers.

He added that they are also starting production of muscovado sugar using the organic variety of sugarcane.

The cooperative started the trading of the white variety of organic rice but later chose to specialize in red rice because this could not be faked.

He explained that the chemically grown white variety could easily be passed off as organic with just a tag.

Pioneers

Bicaldo said developing a regular commercial supply of organic rice took several years and with lots of effort on their part before they were able to persuade and train PDCI members to shift from chemical-based farming to organic farming.

"There were only five of us farmers here who pioneered in organic rice farming. Now there are 77 farmers inside the hacienda producing organic rice and another 125 farmers all over Camarines Sur regularly supplying PDCI's trading and marketing program," he said.

Bicaldo tills a 1.7-hectare rice farm inside the hacienda that yields P150 sacks of palay every cropping.

He started shifting to organic farming in 1993, gradually weaning away from chemical use so that, after two years of religiously discarding chemical inputs, he was able to fully shift to chemical-free production.

Bicaldo credited their sustainability and growth to a Belgium-based non-government organization Trias, Organic Certification Center of the Philippines, Federation of People's Sustainable Development Center, Philippine Development Assistance Programme and Upland Marketing Foundation Inc. for providing them trading and marketing capabilities like capitalization, training, technical support and marketing networks.

Bicaldo said their production of organic red rice now covers some 100

hectares within the hacienda, and 120 hectares in the towns of Pili, Ocampo, Minalabac, Nabua, Baa, Calabanga and Libmanan, all in Camarines Sur.

He revealed that, in the coming year, they would expand organic production to 300 hectares, including massive promotion in Albay.

He said the incentives of having more earnings and regaining the natural productive state of farm lots are drawing more farmers to shift to organic farming, amid continuing increase of input requirements of chemical-based farming.

Bicaldo told the INQUIRER that, with the 150 sacks of palay yield every cropping, he could save rice stock for family consumption until the next cropping season while earning income from the stock surplus.

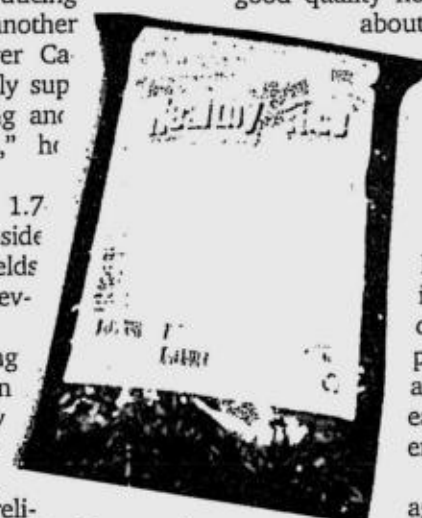
Bicaldo earns a gross income of P13/kilo of palay at farmgate price when the prevailing buying price of non-organic palay is at P10.50. He added that the organic rice is bought at P30/kilo at farmgate price while the good quality non-organic rice is sold about P24/kilo.

But this organic farmer stressed that to be able to sustain production in a small farm, one must practice other farming technologies like poultry, hog raising and fishpond production, saying that his poultry production alone provides him net earnings of P30,000 every production season.

The co-op sustains its agri-credit program that provides production and cash loans to its members. At the same time, it provides other income sources through livestock program, vegetables and other alternative crop production.

To run the wide-ranging concern of PDCI, Bicaldo said, it employs 27 workers and several more on periodic basis.

In recognition, the Department of Agriculture awarded the PDCI the national Gawad Saka Award as Best Organic Farm for 2006-2007, while CDA has been cited as one of the 100 Cooperative Top Grossers of 2007.



PACKAGED organic rice are sold in 150 outlets in Metro Manila.

To drum up exports, Yap opens facilities for Pangasinan mango

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

MANAOAG, PANGASINAN—AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap recently inaugurated facilities for mango processing that would boost the chances of Pangasinan mangoes to enter the international market.

The Department of Agriculture granted the extended hot water equipment (EHWT) and seven units of mango dryer machines to the Pangasinan Tropical Fruits Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The cooperative provided the building and other equipment for the project.

Yap said the DA wanted to increase mango exports because 95 percent of the country's production is consumed locally while only 5 percent is shipped out.

The EHWT destroys eggs of fruit flies in fresh mangoes.

Lito Arenas, chair of the cooperative, said it is a facility that complies with the sanitary requirements imposed by the Chinese government for fresh mango exports to Hong Kong and China.

"The requirement was imposed by the Chinese government due to the discovery of mangoes infected with fruit flies from previous exports," Arenas said.

Arenas said the project would initially benefit 100 mango growers and contractors in the province and other mango growers in the Ilocos region who could now

command higher prices for their produce.

China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Brussels are among the cooperative's initial buyers of fresh mangoes.

Yap also inaugurated a facility hosting mango dryer machines of the Lito Arenas Trading, a company that buys the fruits produced by the cooperative.

The facility can produce 27 metric tons of dried mangoes per month. Arenas said 180 metric tons of fresh mangoes are needed to produce 27 tons of dried mangoes.

The facility has seven machines, including five given by different government agencies.

Each month, a ton of dried mangoes is produced for export to Japan and the United Arab Emirates, Arenas said. The plant has also started producing pickled mangoes and papaya for export to Canada through a group based in Metro Manila.

Arenas said fresh fruits rejected by the market are processed so losses, due to spoilage and wastage, are minimized.

The processing plant also gives employment to residents.

Arenas said during peak season, about 200 workers are hired on a daily basis.

Pangasinan is a top producer of mango in the country, contributing 41 percent of the total production. This was the first time however, that a mango processing plant was established in the province.



PSBank
US Dollar
TIME DEPOSIT

	\$1,000 to 9,999	\$10,000 to 49,999	\$50,000 to 99,999	\$100,000 and up
1 month	3.50%	3.50%	3.63%	3.75%
2 months	3.50%	3.63%	3.75%	3.88%
3 months	3.63%	3.75%	3.75%	3.88%
6 months	3.75%	3.88%	3.88%	4.00%
12 months	3.88%	4.00%	4.13%	4.25%

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China putting more money in Wall St.

Chinese gov't controlled funds buy stake in US financial firms

NEW YORK—THERE IS A GOOD reason schools across the US are scrambling to find people who can teach Chinese: It's quickly becoming business' second language as Wall Street seeks to tap China's \$1.3 trillion (900-billion euros) in foreign reserves.

China has been making increasingly aggressive investments in some of the world's most prestigious financial companies in recent months.

Morgan Stanley, Bear Stearns, Blackstone Group, and Britain's Barclays have all negotiated major stakes by Chinese government-controlled investment funds.

Investment banks ailing from the subprime mortgage mess are looking for money to shore up their balance sheets. And China is leading a surge of strategic investments from Asia and the Middle East that so far have sunk about \$25 billion (17.39 billion euros) into Wall Street banks.

That's just the start of what some believe is a dramatic reversal of financial power in the shadow of Wall Street's credit turmoil.

"Both Chinese private and government interests are controlling more and more of the US economy, and this is a result of the big trade and budget deficits we have," said Alan Donziger, professor of economics at Villanova School of Business. "These investments will make the US somewhat less independent, but this is inevitable when we live in a global economy."

In the 1980s, Japanese in-

vestors snapped up real estate and invested in businesses across a number of sectors. This new wave of foreign investment is different because Asian and Middle Eastern governments are taking stakes in financial institutions—a cornerstone of the US economy.

China agreed to pay \$5 billion (3.48 billion euros) for a 9.9-percent stake in Morgan Stanley, and those securities pay 9 percent a year until they convert to shares in 2010. That translates to a gain of about \$450 million (313 million euros) of cash next year.

But, for Morgan Stanley investors, the infusion of new stock two years from now will dilute their shares—and potentially make owning Morgan Stanley's securities less valuable. The same can be said about other banks that receive foreign investments.

The deals have been structured so that the sovereign funds are passive investors with no seat on the board, and this escapes regulatory scrutiny. But some banking analysts believe these government-sponsored funds might get more say than the banks are admitting.

"The Chinese are putting \$5 billion (3.48 billion euros) into Morgan Stanley without there being some kind of quid pro quo of what they're going to get other than interest on their investment," said Dick Bové, an analyst with Punk Ziegler & Co. "It's part of a major shift in the worldwide financial system that I think will be very negative to the US." AP



SHOPPERS walk past an advertisement set in front of a store in New York. US consumers went on a spending spree in November, lifting US retail sales 1.2 percent for the month. AFP

Recalls haunt toy companies

NEW YORK—LAST SUMMER'S SLEW OF toy recalls has not faded from US consumers' minds, and those memories are hurting the industry at its most important time of the year.

With the lack of a must-have toy such as last year's T.M.X Elmo from Mattel Inc., early reports of weak holiday store traffic and concerns over consumer spending, the industry was already hard-pressed to duplicate last year's resurgent performance.

Recent data show many consumers are spending less on playthings this holiday season because of the recalls, while others remain leery of products made in Chinese factories.

While weaker toy sales will probably be a drag on many major retailers—Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Target Corp., Costco Wholesale Corp. and Toys "R" Us all feature the category prominently—the manufacturers have paid the brunt of the bill.

And investors have noticed. All of the industry leaders' shares have fallen at double-digit percentage rates since the recalls started.

"The recalls have definitely had an impact on the way consumers shop for toys this year," said BMO Capital Markets analyst Gerrick Johnson. "This year (shoppers) had no reason to get into the store and a reason to stay away."

Johnson, who has an "underperform" rating on the sector, said he expected the recalls to contribute to lower fourth quarter sales and higher-than-expected inventory numbers for toy companies.

A recent MSN-Zogby poll showed that one in four US shoppers would spend less on toys for the holidays this year as a result of the recalls, which were often due to potentially dangerous levels of lead paint or small parts that could get ripped off a product and create a choking hazard.

The poll also found 83 percent of Americans associated unsafe toys with China, where millions of recalled items were made.

Only 42 percent of respondents said they associated large manufacturers like Mattel, Walt Disney Co. and Hasbro Inc. with safe toys, while 43 percent did not.

With retail buyers now deciding on next year's purchases, Johnson said today's weak market for toys could lead to fewer orders for 2008.

The recalls even gave consumers an incentive to delay holiday toy purchases this year so they could be sure products were safe, Needham & Co. analyst Sean McGowan said.

Such a late start is "not, typically, a good sign," McGowan said.

The recalls have also curbed demand for toy stocks, which are down across the board since Mattel's Aug. 1 recall of 1.5 million Chinese-made Fisher-Price items, some of which featured popular preschool characters like Elmo and Big Bird. Reuters

European retail sector faces ho-hum holiday season

LONDON—HEADING INTO CHRISTMAS, early data and anecdotal signs show the festive carve up among European retail's winners and losers will be starker than ever before.

Squeezed by falling house prices and jittery about rising interest rates, retail analysts say shoppers are favoring supermarkets, online sellers and big name department stores at the expense of retailers of clothing and large household goods.

"This is going to be one of the most disparate Christmases we've seen," said Bryan Roberts, London-based consultancy Planet Retail's global retail research manager.

"The same pressures are being applied to consumers around the world—rising fuel prices, the credit crunch, weaker and weaker housing markets. Trying to drag extra spend from shoppers will really hurt."

How Europe's retailers fare in the crucial Christmas trading period, when they can ring up as much as half of their yearly sales, will not be confirmed until at least mid-January.

But investors are already heading for the doors with autumn profit warnings from some apparel retailers, like Britain's French Connection, indicating discretionary spending is stuttering amid signs of a slowing world economy.

European retail stocks have shed 4.1 percent in the month to date and 1.8 percent so far this year, underperforming a 2.9-percent month-on-month fall in the broader Dow Jones 600 Index.

It is a sharp reverse from just three months ago when the retailers were buoying overall market gains.

But on the Boulevard Haussmann, the central Parisian shopping street, some of France's best known brands are upbeat, reflecting how far apart are winners and losers in the holiday shopping war this year.

Meanwhile, the attraction of a one-stop-shop for stressed out gift buyers is boosting online buying from retail-

ers such as Game Group, Amazon, Sony and Arcandor, according to Internet research firm ComScore Inc.

Forrester Research expects Europeans to spend around 51 billion euros (\$73.29 billion) on Christmas shopping online.

European supermarkets like Carrefour and Tesco are also benefiting from shopper fatigue as they expand into nonfood and lure customers from specialist stores.

The cash-strapped consumer's tendency to trade up on food while penny pinching on discretionary items is also playing to the advantage of grocery retailers, like Dutch Ahold. Reuters



SHOPPERS walk past a Santa Clause doll on sale at a gift shop in Shanghai, China. Christmas, while not traditionally celebrated, is gaining popularity in the communist country with retailers capitalizing on the holiday spirit to boost their end of year sale. AP

Web tool to compare executive pay launched

WASHINGTON—THE US SECURITIES and Exchange Commission last week gave investors an easier way to compare executive compensation at 500 US companies with an online, interactive tool.

The site—www.sec.gov/xbri—also lets users compare pay data by industry, executive type and size of company, among other specifications.

"Gone are the complicated data expeditions that forced investors to hunt through financial statements, footnotes, proxy statements, and other disclosure documents to figure out how much a company pays its top executives," SEC Chair Christopher Cox said in a statement.

The SEC adopted stricter rules about executive pay disclosure a year ago that resulted in more details in annual

shareholder proxy statements in 2007.

One of the major changes was a requirement that companies disclose major executives' total compensation as a single figure.

Previously, companies presented the pay data in a jumble of charts and tables.

Using the new tool, an analysis showed that former Merrill Lynch CEO Stan O'Neal was the highest paid executive in 2006 at the largest US companies included in the data set.

He earned \$91.38 million in total compensation last year.

Behind him were former AT&T Inc. CEO Ed Whitacre with \$60.73 million in 2006 pay, Merrill Lynch executive vice president Ahmass Fakahany with \$50.85 million, AT&T Inc. retired president David Dorman with \$44.71 million, and ConocoPhillips CEO James

Mulva with \$43.44 million.

The executive compensation tool also allows users to compare valuation methods for option awards, which was the issue of a controversial, 11th-hour change to the new pay disclosure rules one year ago.

The summary compensation table initially was to include an estimated value for stock options granted during the year. But the SEC changed its mind and announced in December 2006 that the table would instead include the value of option grants that vested, or became eligible to be exercised, during the year.

Some investor advocates said the approach of focusing on incremental vesting amounts could obscure the real gains of executives by shrinking the option values in the summary table and in the bottom-line single number. Reuters

Alitalia picks Air France-KLM's 6.5-B euro rescue program

ROME—ALITALIA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS said last week it had advised the Italian government to pursue an offer by Air France-KLM to rescue the near-bankrupt airline with a long-term investment of 6.5 billion euros.

In the widely expected decision, the board said it preferred the rescue plan by Air France, the world's largest airline by revenues, to another proposed by the Italian company Air One.

"The proposal by Air France-KLM is the more opportune and calls for a significant investment plan (of) 6.5 billion euros (\$9.3 billion) in the long-term," Alitalia said in a statement.

The twice-postponed decision, which the statement said was unanimous, was reached after seven hours of discussion by the board of the flag carrier, which is losing some one million euros a day.

"The business plan presented by Air France-KLM was of great credibility and capable of resolving Alitalia's

strategic, industrial and financial crises," the statement said.

Alitalia is beset by high operating costs and fierce competition from budget rivals.

"The Alitalia brand and the Italian identity will remain a basic asset of the company and will be further developed to the benefit of the new group," the board said, adding that Air France would make these assurances to the Italian government, which owns a 49.9-percent stake in the ailing airline.

The government will not announce whether it will adopt the board's recommendation until mid-January, reportedly fearing union action over the holiday season.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, a former European Commission president, had earlier vowed to announce a decision by Christmas.

The unions, fearing fallout from restructuring—notably sizeable lay-

offs—have threatened strike action if they are not kept fully informed of the rescue plan for the airline.

Prodi's wide-ranging center-left government reportedly remains divided between the two offers, though Prodi himself, as well as his economy and development ministers, are said to lean toward Air France.

Alitalia boss Maurizio Prato also implicitly backed the Air France plan in remarks ahead of the decision.

"Air France-KLM, with a turnover of more than 23 billion euros and a capitalization of around 7.2 billion euros, is the world's largest airline in terms of receipts and has proven successful experience in industrial integration and restructuring," Alitalia's statement said.

Air France—which stayed away from a failed attempt to auction Alitalia last July—has proposed a share-swap that would allow Alitalia to have a place in the new entity with full rights. AFP



ALITALIA and Air One passenger jets are seen on the tarmac of Rome's Fiumicino international airport. AP

People, Events & Products

AIG PhilAm Bank launches Holiday shopping promo

AFTER THE SUCCESS OF ITS "Raise & Erase" raffle promo, AIG PhilAm Bank has launched yet another program to continue rewarding new and loyal customers and sustain customer satisfaction. With a persistent desire to provide AIG PhilAm Credit Card and Dolce Vita MasterCard cardholders greater value for their hard-earned money, the bank has introduced its holiday offerings.

"Last year, we held the 'P1 Million Shopping Spree' at Rustan's promo which allowed our winner to enjoy a shopping experience at the country's premier department store, among other exclusive privileges. On the other hand, the recently-held 'Raise & Erase' raffle, which offered our credit cardholders the chance to win P1 Million in cash credits gave our winner the opportunity to erase her outstanding balance or offset future purchases billed to her credit card account," AIG PhilAm's cards marketing VP Sandro Villaraza explained.

On top of AIG PhilAm's list of holiday perks for its credit cardholders is a raffle promo, dubbed as AIG Credit Cards' "Holiday Travel Escapade". The program offers an all-expense paid round trip air tickets for four to Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia. Apart from airfare tickets and hotel accommodations, pocket money will also be awarded to winners of the raffle promo. On

top of these, winners of the Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia trips will win tickets to Sentosa Island, HK Disneyland and Australian Wonderland, respectively.

"We wanted to keep the excitement going, and so this time, we are giving our cardholders the chance to travel for free, with hotel accommodations and travel allowance," Villaraza said.

Aside from the raffle promo, AIG Credit Cards has also launched exclusive offerings and special discounts with partner merchants that cardholders can avail. AIG Credit Card cardholders can buy not only appliances and furniture, computers, toys and gadgets, but designer brands as well (at Rustan's Department Store and Stores Specialist Inc outlets) on installment at 0-percent interest.

"We all know that the Holidays is a time for families and friends to get together, celebrate, and exchange gifts, and we want to make sure that our customers are empowered to do all that by offering them discounts and exclusive privileges through the use of their AIG Credit Card. We also included in the program dining establishments where our customers are entitled to big discounts and special treats. We even partnered with Enchanted Kingdom, the biggest theme park in the country so that our cardholders

may enjoy P220-discount on Good-Any-Day Passes and spend quality time with their loved ones," he added.

"With all these offerings, our cardholders will be able to maximize their Christmas shopping budget, and at the same time try their luck in the Holiday Travel Escapade raffle promo," Villaraza said. "Certainly, it's our way of thanking our valued cardholders for their continuing loyalty and support."

AIG PhilAm Savings Bank is a subsidiary of American International Group Inc (AIG), world leaders in insurance and financial services. AIG is the leading international insurance organization with operations in more than 130 countries and jurisdictions. AIG companies serve commercial, institutional and individual customers through the most extensive worldwide property-casualty and life insurance networks of any insurer. In addition, AIG companies are leading providers of retirement services, financial services and asset management around the world. AIG's common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, as well as the stock exchanges in Paris, Switzerland and Tokyo.

For more information on AIG Credit Cards call 683-8888 or 1-800-1888-8600 (domestic toll-free).

Globe backs 'Pamaskong Handog sa OFW 2007'

GLOBE JOINED FORCES WITH DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) and other government and private organizations to bring an early Christmas gift to overseas Filipino workers (OFW), the "Pamaskong Handog sa OFW 2007".

"Pamaskong Handog" is a yearly welcoming and gift-giving activity for returning OFWs during the Christmas season sponsored by DOLE-Owwa in cooperation with Globe and other partners. The annual program is one way of recognizing OFWs' valuable contribution to national development.

With the theme "DOLE-Owwa: Kaagapay sa Iyong Pagbabalik,"

the program was launched in a ceremony at the Naia Terminal 1 Dec. 10. Representative and Overseas Workers Affairs Committee Chair Manuel "Way Kurat" Zamora was invited as guest speaker. During the program, three lucky returning OFWs were picked and awarded a 25" TV, DVD player, \$500 gift certificate and Samsonite luggage by various sponsors.

The event was capped by a celebrity welcome led by popular actress/host Jolina Magdangal and comedienne Mini Aguilar who distributed gifts to disembarking OFWs at the arrival area.

From Dec. 10 to 24, OFWs arriving at the Naia terminals 1 and 2 had a

chance to meet-and-greet popular movie and TV personalities courtesy of Globe. Aside from Jolina, other celebrities who took part in the celebrity welcome were Luis Alandy, Alfred Vargas, TJ Trinidad, Keempee de Leon, Iza Calzado, and Pauleen Luna.

Aside from the daily celebration welcome, a grand Presidential Salubong was also held Dec. 20, wherein President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo herself led in welcoming returning OFWs at the Naia Terminal 1. Three lucky OFWs were selected and received P100,000 from Globe.

There will also be OFW Salubong at Clark Airport.

Pamaskong Handog also features a Family Fair for dependents of OFWs. The OFW Family Fair is an annual event where OFWs and their families join together for an entire-day celebration filled with fun, games, gifts, and raffles.

The OFW Family Fair kicked off at Tagum City, Davao del Norte Dec. 2. The OFW Family Fair celebrations were also held at Legaspi, Bicol Dec. 8; Bongbaw, Tawi-Tawi Dec. 12; Calapan, Occidental Mindoro Dec. 13 and 14; SM San Fernando, Pampanga and Isulan, Sultan Kudarat Dec. 14; SM Baguio, Laoag, Nueva Vizcaya, SM Iloilo, Tacloban City, Cagayan de Oro, and Alabang Festival Mall Dec. 15; Iligan City Dec. 16; SM Davao Dec. 17; and Palacio de Maynila, Manila Dec. 19.



ACTRESS/HOST Jolina Magdangal hands over an OFW Family Pack to a returning overseas Filipino worker who just arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport as part of the celebrity 'salubong' of DOLE-Owwa, in cooperation with Globe.



GUILT-FREE SUGARNOT TREATS

Indulge in mouth-watering treats this holiday season without the guilt. Among Sugarnot's sugar-free treats are Food for the Gods, chewy cookie bars with dates and walnuts topped with sugar-free powder; fruit cake made of carrots, pineapple, raisin, and dates, garnished with glazed cherries and walnuts; banana loaf mixed with Belgian dark chocolate, garnished with glazed cherries and walnuts; and Sugarnot cupcakes topped with lemon, mint and strawberry flavors. Sugarnot Christmas treats are now available at Sugarnot branches at the Podium in Ortigas, The Block in SM City North Edsa, Westgate Alabang, SM Megamall and South Super Highway, Makati.

A more 'substantial' gift from Ducks Unlimited

DUCKS UNLIMITED, A PHILIPPINE-based leader in classic men's fashion, has launched a range of Christmas gifts for men available at all its branches.

Customers looking for more substantial gifts will find the Ducks Unlimited Christmas gift selection an ideal choice. The 100-percent Egyptian cotton fabric and timeless designs always aim to create a unique classic collection for the more discerning male.

Finally, customers shopping for the boyfriend, husband or son who has it all can buy the Ducks Unlimited shopping discount card. For every purchase of Ducks Unlimited items worth P10,000, you will get the card. The card can be used at all

Ducks stores.

Ducks Unlimited offers the latest in men's fashion, encompassing a range of styles to suit every shopper. Ayo Gunting, PR consultant, said, Ducks' extensive collection embraces everything from the latest fashion trends to classic pieces, and extends to underwear, socks, accessories and even big shirts for big men.

Ducks also provides the simplest way to search for and buy men's clothing, placing it among the leading fashion retailers in the Philippine market today.

Ducks Unlimited has its presence in over 13 branches in Robinsons, SM, and Festival malls, Landmark, Greenhills Shoppesville, and Century Park Sheraton Hotel.



The 'mane' course for the Season

OSIS, THE DYNAMIC BRAND of hairstyling products from Schwarzkopf Professional, has always been about creative expression and fearless fashion, always challenging the norm and pushing the envelope.

Because Schwarzkopf Professional never stops coming up with new and trendy Osis products, fashionistas enjoyed the experience of styling their hair with ease and freedom. There is a variety of exciting products to choose from such as, Osis Mess Up, an unconventional packaged matte gum for an extreme freeform matte styling; Osis Hairbody, a spray-on conditioner that holds even when blow-drying; and Osis Upload, a multi-purpose styling booster for flexible hold and moisture. Osis Magic is an anti-frizz serum that gives your hair that glossy shine and silky touch; while Osis Stick Up hard wax allows you to tousle and then tame your hair, thus making sculpting a breeze.

With a total of 18 products

to choose from, clients are offered a world of endless possibilities.

As a Christmas gift for die-hard Osis stylists, Schwarzkopf Professional is giving away limited edition Osis Handy Pads for every purchase of any Osis product at authorized distributors and participating salons. The more Osis products you buy, the more Handy Pads you can bring home!

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to own unique Osis products and the exclusive Osis Handy Pad at the same time. Not only will you have a stylish 'do that can turn heads, you also get to own a rare item that only a select few can avail of. If you're feeling extra generous this Christmas, you can give these Handy Pads to your friends as gifts! Now that's a real treat.

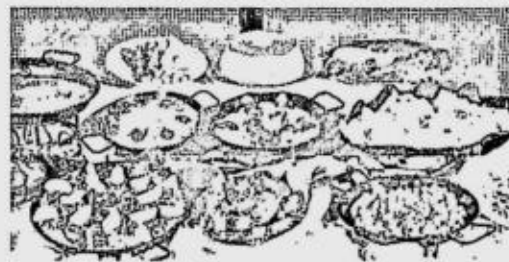
Osis products are available in major salons nationwide. For inquiries, call Top Style Marketing Inc at 638-2401.

First-rate Yule take-out and catering at Casa Armas

LOOKING FORWARD TO RELAXED AND meaningful Christmas and New Year celebrations, unperturbed by the mad rush for party or endless meal preparations? Let Casa Armas Tapas Bar Y Restaurante make your holiday events this year stress-free, yet special and memorable for guests. Simply let the expert staff of Casa Armas get the catering job done the way you want it to happen, the way you want it to taste-or in the most superb way possible.

What's more, Casa Armas Catering Solutions will complement sumptuous food fare with accompanying floral arrangements and crisp linen, laid out in attractive and tasteful manner. From start to end, Casa Armas' capable team of chefs and service professionals will get the job done the way discerning clientele would want it. It's real value for hard-earned money.

Should you opt to for Casa Armas Catering Solutions to bring the tempting tastes and aroma of Spain to your home or workplace, there is a wide, enticing



SHOWN are some of the delectable Spanish dishes offered by Casa Armas for dine-in, catering or holiday take-out.

menu of over 100 Spanish food selections to choose from. The delectable Spanish specialties include the succulent cochinillo, tantalizing Than Long crabs and irresistible roast chicken. A mouth-watering selection of paellas, tapas, chorizos, delicacies, Spanish wines and cheese toast the exotic tastes of various Spanish regions. Casa Armas Catering Solutions offers five delectable packages ranging in price from P560+/head to P1,010+/head.

Individuals who want to bring the Casa Armas touch to potluck holiday celebrations or anywhere else may choose from a wide assortment of the enjoyable Casa Armas Holiday Takeout treats.

Holiday get-togethers, company Christmas parties, and virtually every type of celebration stand to benefit from the Casa Armas touch. To let special friends and family members with refined tastes indulge and savor the exotic taste of Spanish culinary classics, gift certificates in preferred denominations are available at the Casa Armas branches in The Podium and Greenbelt 3. The Casa Armas gift certificates make perfect tokens of appreciation especially for those who have everything.

For inquiries and reservations, call Casa Armas at 687-3663 (The Podium); 897-3542 (Jupiter, Makati branch); or 757-4996 (Greenbelt branch). Opening this December is the Casa Armas branch at the third level of TriNoma at North Avenue corner Edsa, Quezon City.

Goodie house classics, other surprises at Heritage Hotel

SEND YOUR HOLIDAY GIFT-GIVING ANXieties to the shredders. The Heritage Hotel Manila is just around the corner, a phone call away, and even just a click away to provide you with a one-stop Santa's Yuletide shop for sharing good tidings with ease and aplomb.

Start ticking off gifts for loved ones who love palate-pleasers such as a Gingerbread House, English Fruit Cake, Christmas-themed chocolates, Yuletide cookies and other Goodie House Classics available at Santa's walk-in Holiday Cottage, Hotel Lobby.

Then why not make this season more memorable with an intimate Yuletide

lunch or dinner with family and friends at the Riviera Café's lunch/dinner buffet on-going until Jan. 6, 2008. Fulfill gastronomic merriment as you indulge in the stuffed roast turkey served with cranberry sauce, honey glazed ham and roast ribeye with red wine sauce, amongst a myriad of international delights, made more tempting with a cornucopia of Santa's favorite sweets.

For inquiries and dining reservations, call the Heritage Hotel Manila at 854-8888 or e-mail foodbev@heritagehotelmanila.com. The Heritage Hotel Manila is managed by the Millennium Hotels and Resorts.

It's a coffee Christmas



CHRISTMAS IS THE TIME TO REMEMBER friends we have not seen the whole year. One way to let our friends keep remembering us is to give them the gift of coffee. It's an everyday habit that will remind them of the warmth of having friends just close by. Everyday that they brew coffee will remind them of good times spent with friends and family.

Figaro has coffee beans in thoughtful packs just right for one week's coffee habit. Give a friend a few packs of various blends and roasts that should see them through the Holidays and until the New Year. Coffee blends, coffee tumblers, coffee books and a calendar with award-winning coffee photography are now available at all Figaro stores nationwide.

**More PEP
next page**

People, Events & Products

Globe's great Christmas offerings to subscribers

GLOBE BRINGS GOOD TIDING AND cheer this month as it launches its big Christmas offerings to all its subscribers throughout the country, kicking off with its "Paskong Panalo" promo where P16 million worth of prizes will be given away.

Globe not only helps subscribers get closer to their family and friends but also adds to the merriment of this holiday season with its various services and promos to all Globe and TM subscribers.

With the launch of Globe's "Paskong Panalo" promo, Globe and TM subscribers can win cash prizes, iPod Shuffles, Nokia handsets, Noche Buena baskets, Christmas dinner and party packages, shopping gift certificates, and kitchen, computer and entertainment showcases. At the grand draw, six subscribers can get P1 million each.

To join, register by sending PAMASKO REG <name/age/gender/address> to 2366 for ABS CBN shows and to 4627 for GMA shows. Registration is free. Subscribers will have to watch for the Globe Paskong Panalo logo in their favorite shows and download the infotext tip to get one raffle entry. Send entries by typing, PAMASKO <showcode> and send to 2366 for ABS CBN shows and to 4627 for GMA shows, only P2.50 per download.

To get more chances of winning, infotext tips can be downloaded up to 10

times per show per day. The promo will run until Dec. 28. For more info, text PAMASKO INFO to 2366 or 4627 for free.

Globe gives its subscribers many reasons to be merry this December as it treats them with grand Christmas offerings that will keep families connected this Yuletide season.

OFW Family Pack

Getting in touch with loved ones abroad is made easy and affordable with the new OFW Family Pack. Bundled with two SIMs, it has special features and discounts for both the hard-working Pinoy abroad and their families here at home.

At a price of only P120, get one roaming SIM for the OFW and another SIM for the family and enjoy P1 per text message and P7.50 per minute call abroad. The OFW SIM has a special roaming privilege that allows zero daily maintaining balance while roaming. Also, make P0.17 per second IDD calls to a foreign number where the OFW is located with the OFW Family Pack. Text TIPID IDD to 2929 for free to know more about the promo.

This Christmas, subscribers get two free cinema tickets for every purchase of OFW Family Pack with load of P50 at the Ayala Malls, namely Glorietta, Market! Market!, TriNoma, Alabang Town Center and Ayala Center Cebu.

Families of OFWs can also win GCash up to P40,000 for every remittance claimed from GCash Advise and Pay partners. OFWs must send their remittances through Philippine National Bank (PNB), Kabayan Remittance Singapore, Calisons Hong Kong, AmeerTech Singapore, and BTI Hong Kong to qualify for the promo.

Each remittance claim from Dec. 1, 2007 to Jan. 31, 2008 will earn one electronic raffle entry. The grand draw will be held on Feb. 8, 2008, 2 p.m. at 4th floor Globe Telecom Plaza Tower 2. For the complete list of all GCash Advise and Pay partners call 2882.

Various activities for the OFWs were also launched this month as part of Globe's holiday offerings for its subscribers. These include the Owva Salubong at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Owva Presidential Salubong, OFW Family Pairs and Duty Free Events. In partnership with "Eat Bulaga", Globe added a special \$2,000 Duty Free shopping spree prize every Saturdays of December for the lucky text home partner in "Taktak Mo".

Globe also makes it convenient and easy on the pocket to connect to families and friends from all over the country and around the world during Christmas season with its various call and text promos and service offerings.

Send 100 text messages to Globe prepaid subscribers for only P15 with

Globe's Sulitxt 15, available until Jan. 31. For unlimited texting from 8 a.m. to 4:59 p.m. at only P15 get Globe's Unlitxt Day 15. There's also Unlitxt Day 30 for two days unlimited texts from 8 a.m. to 4:59 p.m. at P30. Both are offered until Jan. 14. Globe also keeps subscribers connected even when on the go with Yahoo One Search.

Globe's postpaid subscribers get 3-minute Globe-to-Globe calls for only P10 and Kada Segundo at only P0.10 per second for Globe-to-Globe calls. It also has budget IDD at P0.17 per second for Globe-to-Globe calls. Postpaid subscribers can take advantage of Unlitxt Day 15 from 8 a.m. to 4:59 p.m. and Unlitxt Day 30 from 8 a.m. to 4:59 p.m. as well.

TM's Todo Text

TM subscribers can enjoy Todo Text 10 until Jan. 14 for unlimited texting from 8 a.m. to 4:59 p.m. for only P10. Until Dec. 31, they can also get 75 TM-to-TM texts for just P10. With Sulitawag 20, available until Jan. 7, make 10-minute TM-to-TM calls at P20 and subscribers can even use this to place several calls.

TM's Todo Tawag 15/15 makes mobile communication even more affordable during the holidays with its 15-minute TM-to-TM call for only P15 and with Kada Segundo subscribers pay only P0.10 per second

for TM-to-TM calls.

To cap its long list of holiday treats, Globe is also giving rewards to the new postpaid and prepaid wireless subscribers and Globe Broadband users as part of its grand Christmas offerings.

New subscribers of postpaid plan 800 and up can get the Globe-exclusive LG KU380 3G phone for free. Under this primary plan, the subscriber is allowed to get up to two extension lines, also with free LG KU380 units. As for the new prepaid subscribers, they can have the LG KU380 3G phone for as low as P6,190. Globe also offers them a chance to win free video call minutes, the LG KU380 and even LG LCD TVs.

Those who sign-up for a Globe Broadband plan also automatically get free gifts. Globe Broadband offers different package bundles for wired and wireless plans suited to one's needs. For the new wired and wireless broadband subscribers, get a free web cam and headset or one-month free subscription with plan 995. For plan 1,295, subscribers can bring home a printer or enjoy one month free subscription. Globe is giving away a printer and web cam or one month free subscription for new subscribers to the wired broadband plan 1,995.

Experience Globe's merry Christmas offerings as it brings to subscribers what matters most to them this holiday season.

Pan Pacific's 'Butler' ready to pamper you today

PAMPER YOURSELF AND EXPERIENCE A heartwarming Holiday Season with the ex-

citing Christmas offerings prepared especially for you by the butlers of Pan Pacific Manila.

Take a musical journey and be enchanted by the angelic voices of the hotel's very own Butler Chorale as they perform your favorite Christmas carols from Dec. 16 to 25 at 5 p.m. For all Fridays of December from 6 to 9 p.m., listen to beautiful, soothing and tranquil music at the lobby by noted harpist Holly Angel Paraiso or relax and soothe your senses with soft piano music at the Pacific Lounge from 7 to 10 p.m.

Book any of Pan Pacific's luxurious guestrooms by availing the "In tune with the Holidays" promo anytime un-

til Jan. 15, 2008. This Holiday special comes with a free personalized music CD, buffet breakfast and the chance to win prizes that you can enjoy with your loved ones.

Welcome 2008 with a big bang and join the yearend party "Symphony to Countdown" for only P2,700++ inclusive of buffet dinner, live entertainment, one cocktail drink and one round of sparkling wine for the helipad countdown.

To avoid the Christmas rush, choose from any of its Perfect Holiday gifts-the White Chocolate Pistachio and the Mango Cheesecake that comes in small and big sizes or the Assorted Cookies and Chocolate Pralines.

For more information about Christmas at Pan Pacific Manila, call 536-0788 and ask for The Butler, of course!

PICA-PICA ANYWHERE

This Christmas, enjoy pica-pica wherever there's a celebration or get together with Chika Pica, the easiest and best way to store ready-to-eat finger foods from Tupperware, the makers of high-quality food storage containers. Put in nuts, banana chips, potato chips, chicharon, pretzels and munchies in this durable 800-ml container, which has a spout for easy pouring. It can also be used as a cereal container. It's convenient for home and



office use and can easily be transported to picnics and excursions.

YULETIDE ROOM PROMO AT THE BELLEVUE

Spend Holiday nights in style and take advantage of special room rates at the most luxurious destination South of the Metro The Bellevue Manila. For as low as P4,500, stay in the lap of luxury for one night and get your second room or second night at an attractive discounted rate. When you stay in one of the hotel's majestic suites, you'll get a complimentary gift certificate for an overnight stay for two in a deluxe room. After all these perks, you'll still get a complimentary breakfast feast at the hotel's main dining outlet Café d'Asie, shuttle service to nearby malls and business districts as well as free use of the swimming pool and gym facilities. For inquiries, call 771-8181.



Heat your Holidays up with Kenny Rogers Roasters

KENNY ROGERS ROASTERS' HOLIDAY RIB PLATE HAS ALL THE trimmings that are lip-smackingly good. For only P299, get half a slab of tender Honey Bourbon Ribs, served with delicious mashed potato, fresh corn-on-the-cob and flavorful chicken noodle soup. All that with a savings of P51! To top it off, you can add-on a decadent Brownie Ala Mode for only P39. The Holiday Rib Plate is available for dine-in, take-out and delivery until Dec. 31. That's definitely a Christmas treat not to be missed.



And whether your idea of a Christmas feast is a leisurely meal at home or a quick lunch or dinner with friends, Kenny has all the freshly prepared and healthy stuff to satisfy any craving. Get them all! Starting off with its famous wood-fire Classic Roast Chicken, the Holiday Rib Plate, mouth-watering entrees from Kenny's Grill, a wide array of side dishes, gourmet sandwiches to its delightful muffins, Kenny is your best bet when it comes to taste, value-for-money and a welcome bonus on health and nutrition.

So, celebrate the season at the Kenny Rogers Roasters branch nearest you, bring some of its delicious dishes to your Holiday parties, or call for delivery service 533-8888.



A 'SELECT' GIFT

It's the season of sharing and gift-giving. CDO-Foodsphere Inc has launched its flagship Christmas Ham product, the CDO Holiday Whole-Meat Ham as an ideal gift for your loved ones. This holiday staple is made from carefully selected whole-piece of prime cut meats slowly cured, fully smoked and simmered in a special mixture. It is coated with pineapple jelly to bring out its luscious taste. Shown is a Holiday Whole-Meat Ham that comes with an elegant gift box as modeled by Melanie Fabian. For more information, call 294-1111.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES OFFICE OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Lot-1 Drydocking & Related Repairs of (DF-352)

Lot-2 Class "B" Overhauling of Port and Center (P/C) Main Engines of DF-352
Supply & Delivery of Repair Parts and other requirements for the Repair/Rehabilitation of Ten (10) Units M-35

- The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the PN Bids and Awards Committee, intends to apply the sum as stated below being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the following Philippine Navy Projects. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

Nomenclature/Activity	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline for Submission/Opening of Bids	
Lot-1 Drydocking & Related Repairs of (DF-352)	Php 3,262,400.00			Php 3,000.00
Lot-2 Class "B" Overhauling of Port and Center (P/C) Main Engines of DF-352	Php 2,500,000.00	December 14, 2007 9:00 AM	December 26, 2007 9:00 AM	Php 3,000.00
Supply & Delivery of Repair Parts and other requirements for the Repair/Rehabilitation of Ten (10) Units M-35	Php 2,431,000.00			Php 3,000.00

- The Armed Forces of the Philippines now invites Eligible Bidders for the Lot-1 Drydocking & Related Repairs of (DF-352) and Lot-2 Class "B" Overhauling of Port and Center (P/C) Main Engines of DF-352 and Supply & Delivery of Repair Parts and other requirements for the Repair/Rehabilitation of Ten (10) Units M-35. Delivery of the goods being procured and description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II and Section III of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
- Interested Bidder may obtain further information from PN BAC and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount Mentioned in Para 1. The method of payment will be in the form of cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
- The Armed Forces of the Philippines will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on December 14, 2007, 9:00 AM at Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee, Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.
- Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before December 26, 2007, 9:00 AM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Surety Bond or Manager's Check. Late bids shall not be accepted.
- Bid opening shall be on December 26, 2007, 9:00 AM at Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee, Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
- The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee
BNS, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Contact person: CDR GLICERIO P VILLANUEVA PN
Cel Nr: 0917-8599-434 / 0918-2016-522
Tel Nr: 616-8218, 815-3420, 843-4416 & 815-8093 local 6341

(Sgd.) ADRIANO V MUNAR JR
CAPT PN (GSC)
Chairman, PNBAC

(PDI-December 25, 2007)

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT-CARAGA
Butuan City
Pizarro Street, Corner Narra Road
Tel. # (085) 342-52-08/342-5667 / Fax: 225-2970



INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Health-Caraga, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : REPAIR & RENOVATION OF CHD-OFFICE BUILDING
Location : DOH-CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT-CARAGA
Brief Description : RENOVATION OF BUILDING
Approved Budget : PhP 6,500,000.00
For the Contract : 180 CD
Contract Duration : MARCH 2008
Delivery Period : MARCH 2008

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 8-15, 2008
2. Pre-bid Conference	January 18, 2008
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (If single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)	January 1-7, 2008
4. Opening of Bids	January 30, 2008
5. Bid Evaluation	February 1-7, 2008
6. Post-qualification	February 1-7, 2008
7. Notice of Award	February 8-15, 2008

For single-stage bidding:

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos Only (PhP5,000.00) to the Department of Health - Center for Health Development - Caraga Cashier Section.

The Department of Health - Center for Health Development - Caraga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) FLORMINDA B. TEJANO, DPA
BAC Chairman

(PDI-Dec. 18 & 25, 2007)



The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM and SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

mourn the death on December 22, 2007 of its former chairman

ADRIAN EMPREMIADO CRISTOBAL, 75

writer, public servant, administrator, academic,
friend and ally of Filipino workers.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

— Revelation 21:4

Wake at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City
on December 26 – 27, 2007.

Death Notice

**NARCISO
S. SAN JUAN**

Died peacefully
on December 22, 2007
at the age of 75.

His body lies in state
at # 3 Fuse St.,
Meralco Village,
Marilao, Bulacan.

Interment will be
on December 26
at Marilao Memorial
Park at 2:00 p.m.

On December 23, 2007.

DR. BENJAMIN R. ZÁRATE

of Baguio City
died in the Grace of our Lord
at the age of 73.

His bereaved wife, Terry, children Jaybee & Neddy, Monina & Louie, Edgar & Joy, Pauline & Antonio, Iah & Dino; grandchildren Kharl and Feline; Kana, Nadine and Luis; Justine and Leanne; and Isabella; his brothers, sisters, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to say a little prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz,
Naguilian Road, Baguio City.
Cremation is scheduled on January 2, 2008 at the
Beyond the Sunset Crematory, Tadiangan, Irian, Benguet.

CLASSIFIEDS

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In Loving Memory

on the Fourteenth Death Anniversary of

DOÑA JUANA VILLARICA MARTEL

January 27, 1898 – December 25, 1993

Masses will be offered for her **today, December 25, 2007**
at the following churches:

CHRIST THE KING PARISH	ALL MASS SCHEDULE
Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City	
MARY THE QUEEN PARISH	6:00 A.M.
Madison St., Greenhills, San Juan	
REDEMPTORIST CHURCH	6:00 A.M.
Baclaran, Parañaque City	
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE	6:15 A.M.
Greenhills, Mandaluyong City	
SHRINE OF MARY QUEEN OF PEACE	6:30 A.M.
Our Lady of EDSA, Quezon City	
ST. FRANCIS PARISH CHURCH	9:00 A.M.
Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City	
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI CHURCH	11:00 A.M.
Magallanes Village, Makati City	
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY	12:00 NN
Sto. Domingo, Quezon City	
MT. CARMEL SHRINE	12:15 P.M.
Doña J. Rodriguez St., New Manila, Quezon City	
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH	4:00 P.M.
A. Arnaiz Ave. Cor. Amorsolo St., Makati City	
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO	4:30 P.M.
McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City	
MINOR BASILICA OF THE BLACK NAZARENE	5:00 P.M.
Quiapo, Manila	
ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE PARISH	5:00 P.M.
Kalayaan Avenue, Bel-Air II, Makati City	
HARRISON PLAZA CHAPEL	5:30 P.M.
2/F, Harrison Plaza Shopping City, Malate, Manila	

Her children,

ENRIQUE

ANTONIO, JR. &

BELÉN LOVINA TICZON

JOSE &

OLGA SEVERINO

CARLOS &

ETELKA JUNGSCHLAGER

RODOLFO &

ALITA TRINIDAD

ROMUALDEZ

RICARDO &

LETICIA

MATIAS (†)

Her Sister, ISABEL V. RAMOS

Nephews, Nieces, Grandchildren & Great-Grandchildren request all pious readers to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.



2007: Banner Year for HARI

Six years since it started its operations as the official distributor of Hyundai cars in the Philippines, Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), is a relatively young player in the local automotive scene, but its achievements are anything but juvenile. With its impressive sweep of major milestones both onshore and offshore in 2007, HARI lives up to its blue-blooded name in unmitigated vitality, proving that age does not matter in making the cut above the competition—performance does.

The race to 8-8-8

"Early this year, we projected a 20% growth for 2007 and further on to 2008 set an 8-8-8 campaign to achieve an 8 percent market share with 8,000 unit sales. However, with a total of 7,432 units sold ending November this year, we've surpassed the year's target with a remarkable 48% growth compared to the same period last year. And with just over 500 units away, HARI is definitely poised to clinching our 8-8-8 goal one year ahead of schedule," disclosed Ms. Fe Perez-Agudo, HARI EVP and Chief Operating Officer, during a recent interview.

"This is definitely an unprecedented year for HARI. In fact, we may even exceed the 8,000 unit mark as precipitated by the sales of the Grand Starex which have steadily grown since its introduction in September. From October to November alone, our Grand Starex sales grew by as much as 157% almost tripling the previous month's sales." Ms. Perez-Agudo revealed further.

Global distinction

For the second time, HARI reinforced its positioning as a globally competitive player in the automotive industry by winning the coveted 2006 Asia-Pacific Distributor of the Year award during the 2007 Hyundai Motor Global Distributors Convention held recently in Hawaii, USA.

From among 198 Hyundai distributors around the world, HARI was heralded as Hyundai's best league of distributors, composed of 7 regional winners, representing all 7 continents. The winners were handpicked by HMC based on a rigid selection criteria involving various distributorship operations in the area of sales, service, parts, and dealership enhancement programs.



Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), official distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines, wins 2006 Award of Excellence as Asia-Pacific Distributor of the Year. In photo (from L-R) are: Mr. Il Sung Seo, President, Hyundai Motor Company Asia Regional Headquarters; Fe Perez-Agudo, EVP and Chief Operating Officer, HARI; Richard L. Lee, Chairman Emeritus, HARI; Sun Bai Kim, General Manager, HMC Int'l Business Operation; and Young-Gil Hyun, Deputy General Manager, HMC Asia Regional Headquarters.

Aside from owning the prestigious title of Distributor of the Year, HARI also showed its mettle in the disciplines of automotive engineering when two of its expert technicians, Reggie Ramos of Hyundai Dagupan and Gilbert Durna of Hyundai Balintawak bagged an overall ranking of Excellent Skills during the recently concluded 7th Hyundai World Skills Olympics held in Chonan, South Korea. The Hyundai World Skills Olympics is a battleground of the world's crème de la crème of Hyundai technicians, where competition is based on solving various "in-planted" problems in the vehicles that Hyundai Motor Company (HMC) chooses. Only the best Hyundai technicians from each distributor with a certification rank of "Expert and Master" level can vie for the title as Hyundai's World Best. HARI's Reggie Ramos and Gilbert Durna bested over 72 Hyundai technicians from 45 countries by garnering top honors, adding leverage to HARI's technical expertise in fortifying after-sales support.

Homegrown excellence

Early this year, a grand new beginning was set underway for HARI's bestselling passenger van, as the Starex GRX CRDi won the Auto Focus People's Choice Award for Full Size Van. HARI again made waves in the automotive industry, as the Grand Starex, barely three months since its launch, was declared Car of the Year in the Luxury Van and MPV category during the 2007 Car of the Year (COTY) – Philippines awards, once again underlining the distinction of this legendary 4th generation Starex as a leading premium people-mover in its class.

Aside from the COTY award, HARI was also bestowed with the Best Marketing Campaign award, recognizing HARI's prowess in formulating marketing strategies and campaigns to leverage the Hyundai brand in the automotive industry and bring it closer to its stakeholders. Among the campaigns that earned for HARI the prestigious award include its reinforcement of its SUV lineup, which now includes the Santa Fe and the Veracruz; HARI's introduction of the all-new Elantra; the launch of the Grand Starex at the first Philippine International Motor Show by CAMPI; HARI's Deuce Royale Lifestyle party, featuring the new generation Azera and Sonata; and the first nationwide debut of the Grand Starex at Legendary: The Grand Starex Exhibit.

HARI likewise gained the upper hand in the SUV market this year, as C! Magazine hailed the Santa Fe as the 2007 Editors' Pick Compact 7-seat SUV of the Year. This fast-selling SUV, together with the Tucson, the Getz and the Grand Starex - HARI's current bestsellers - further bolstered HARI's position as the country's Top 5 automotive brand.

With a grand ensemble of victories and accolades and a string of sales and marketing activities, capped by after sales initiatives to keep its market base, expect the young and dynamic HARI to trail blaze a new legacy in 2008, as it continues to relentlessly drive its way to leap into the ranks of the country's outstanding automotive players and the world's formidable automakers.



Barely three months since its launch, the Grand Starex bagged the Car of the Year Award in the Luxury Van and MPV segment and tripled its sales with a whopping 157% growth.



Starex GRX wins 2007 Auto Focus People's Choice Award for Full Size Van.



Santa Fe, one of HARI's bestselling SUVs, is hailed by C! Magazine as the 2007 Editors' Pick Compact 7-seat SUV of the Year.



Tucson, Getz, and Veracruz are HARI's formidable bestsellers in 2007, shoring up Hyundai's Top 5 ranking in the Philippine automotive industry.



(From L-R) Mr. Young-Gil Hyun, Hyundai Motor Company Deputy General Manager, Mr. Yong Sung Cho, Deputy General Manager for Marketing & Product Planning of Asia Regional Headquarters, Fe Perez-Agudo, EVP and COO of Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI) and Mr. Conrad Marty, President and CEO of HARI, celebrate Sonata's symphony of elegance at the Hyundai Deuce Royale Lifestyle Party.



The Art of Perfection becomes the center of attention—the new generation Azera, flanked by (from L-R) Mr. Young-Gil Hyun, Hyundai Motor Company Deputy General Manager of Asia Regional Headquarters, Mr. Conrad Marty, President and CEO of Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), and Fe Perez-Agudo, EVP and COO of HARI during the Hyundai Deuce Royale Lifestyle Party.



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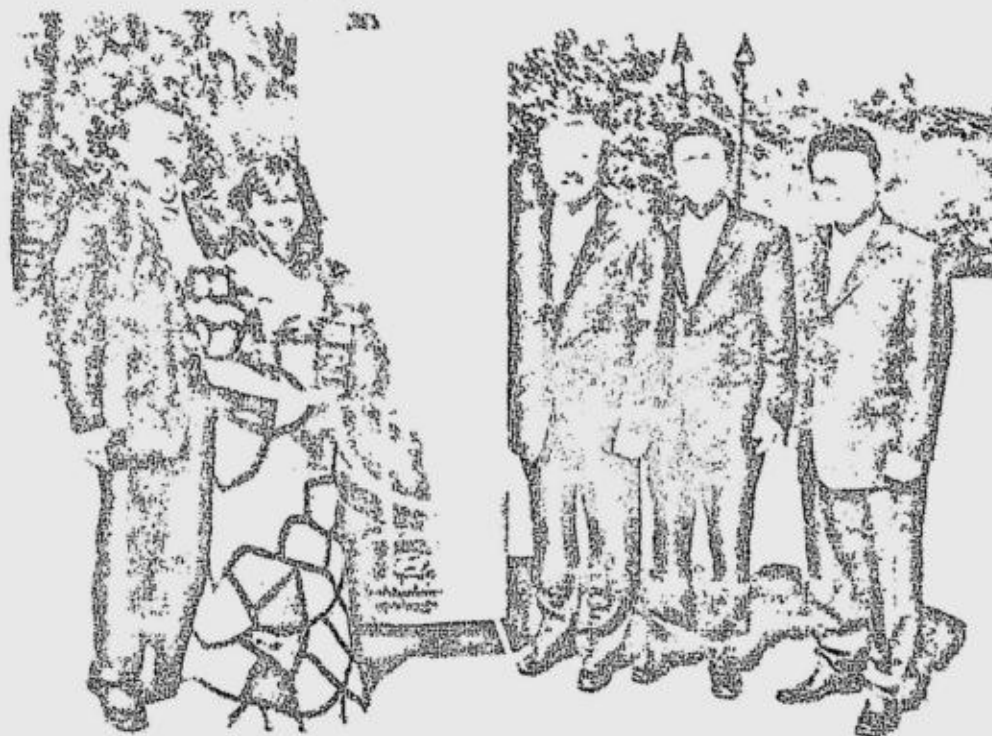
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Unprecedented year for HARI. In fact, we may even exceed the target as precipitated by the sales of the Grand Starex which have steadily introduction in September. From October to November alone, our sales grew as much as 15%. In just tripling the sales in the month of November, Agudo revealed further.

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Hyundai distributors around the world were awarded the 2007 Hyundai Motor Global Distributors Conference. HARI was one of the winners, composed of 7 regional winners. They were handpicked by HMC based on their distributorship operations and the implementation programs.



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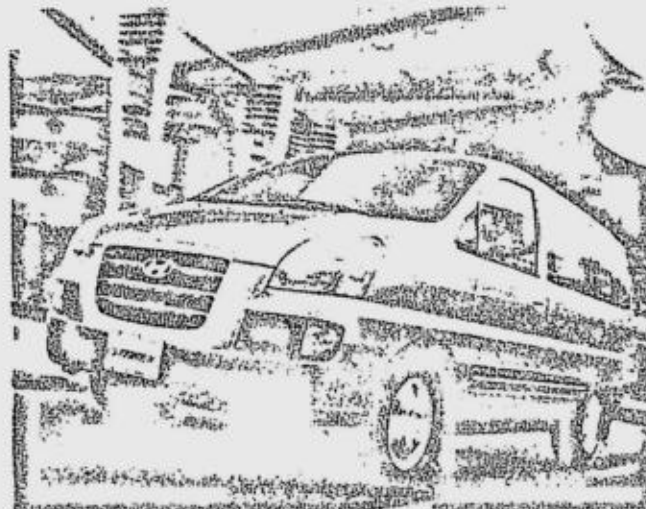
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Starex GRX wins 2007 Auto Focus People's Choice Award for Full Size V.



Santa Fe Magazine.



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(From L-R) Mr. Young-Gil Hyun, Hyundai Motor Company Deputy General Manager; Mr. Yong Sung Cho, Deputy General Manager for Marketing & Product Planning of Asia Regional Headquarters; Fe Perez-Agudo, EVP and COO of Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI); and Mr. Conrad Marty, President and CEO of HARI, celebrate Sonata's symphony of elegance at the Hyundai Deuce Royale Lifestyle Party.



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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle



MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 21

Unlocking the mysteries of the heart and soul

By Anne A. Jambora

Kabbalah aims to equip us with the tools to make positive changes

LET GO OF THE EGO, GET RID of burdens and pain, and be free even of death itself. Remove fears, anger and jealousy. Overcome selfishness and become a being of sharing.

That is the way to experience joy and fulfillment unlike anything before.

This is what Kabbalah, said to be the world's oldest body of spiritual wisdom, teaches. Kabbalah, according to its website (www.kabbalah.com), contains the keys to the mysteries of the human heart and soul, explains the complexities of the material and nonmaterial world, and the physical and metaphysical nature of humanity.

"The wisdom of Kabbalah is a universal wisdom. It teaches the entire blueprint of our world, our universe, and how all the soul of humanity fit into that blueprint," said David Ghiyam, leading world instructor on Kabbalah. He is also the teacher leading Kabbalah Philippines.

Like gravity, he said, the world is guided by spiritual laws that first resided in the Original Source. These laws supposedly move and shape our lives so we may become better versions of us.

It does not matter, for instance, if we believe in gravity or not. We abide by that law and are inevitably affected by it.

Understanding life

Ghiyam said by understanding gravity we understand life. It is the same with spiritual laws. By refusing to acknowledge or ignoring spiritual laws, we invite more chaos and disorder into our lives.

"If you do not want to change, there is always a force causing us to change even if it's through pain. The forces of life will keep pinching us to a repetitive pattern of chaos, pain and suffering until we learn our lessons and change," Ghiyam said.

Kabbalah is not a religion, Ghiyam clarified. It teaches that everyone shares the same ultimate purpose in life—to receive the joy and fulfillment that God intends for each of our lives.

Kabbalah believes everyone is "born with a potential for greatness." Essentially, every human being is a work in progress, continually evolving and growing spiritually until we become who we are meant to be.

Ghiyam said Kabbalah embraces all of humanity regardless of age, sex, race or religion. The Zohar, a book read from right to left, contains the teachings of Kabbalah. Buried in its pages are secrets meant to lead to a life fulfilled. Each teaching intends to expand the human consciousness to a higher level, he said.

"Moses didn't receive a new religion on Mount Sinai. They weren't known as Jewish people then as this concept didn't exist yet. He received a universal wisdom that was coded, the spiritual laws. It is part of our job to reveal that code," he said.

So how will Kabbalah figure into the Filipinos' predominantly Catholic Christian beliefs?

Annotating the Bible

The Zohar, Ghiyam said, could be a reference or commentary on the Bible. The Bible, he said, is a coded verse. If taken at face value, he said, the Bible would not make sense.

"The Bible talks about oxen, cattle and all these metaphors that mean nothing to us today. The Zohar shows what the [Bible] is really trying to say," said Ghiyam.

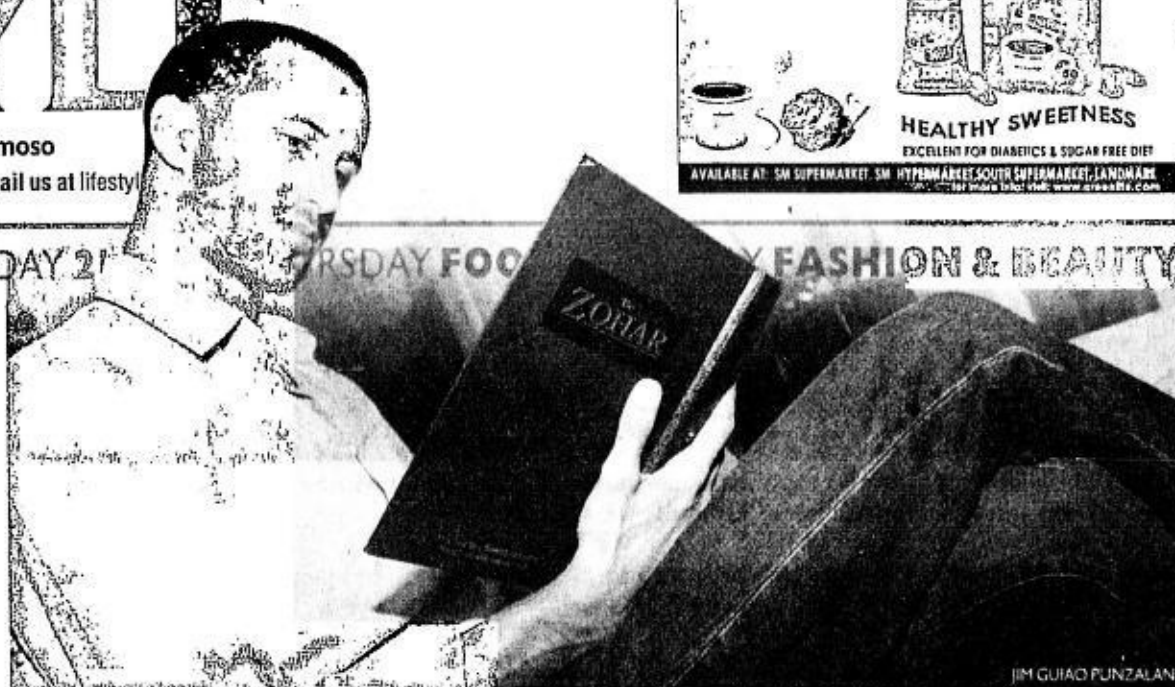
He cited the Book of Genesis where God said "Let there be light" on the first day. Exactly what kind of light was the Bible referring to, said Ghiyam, when the moon and the sun and the stars were created on the fourth day?

How could there be evening and morning on the first day of creation without the sun? How did vegetation flourish on the third day when there was no sunlight yet?

Kabbalah, said Ghiyam, encourages everyone to ask the why's all the time. While many religious advocates take without further questions seemingly contradictory Biblical passages, a Kabbalist, however, considers passages as codes.

"Let there be light" means there was a spiritual force that was created of abundant energy for the whole world to connect to, that God shared His light with all of humanity. And it's up to us, the souls, to find a way to connect with that light. Kabbalah teaches you how to connect through positive transformation," he said.

The Bible, continued Ghiyam, explains

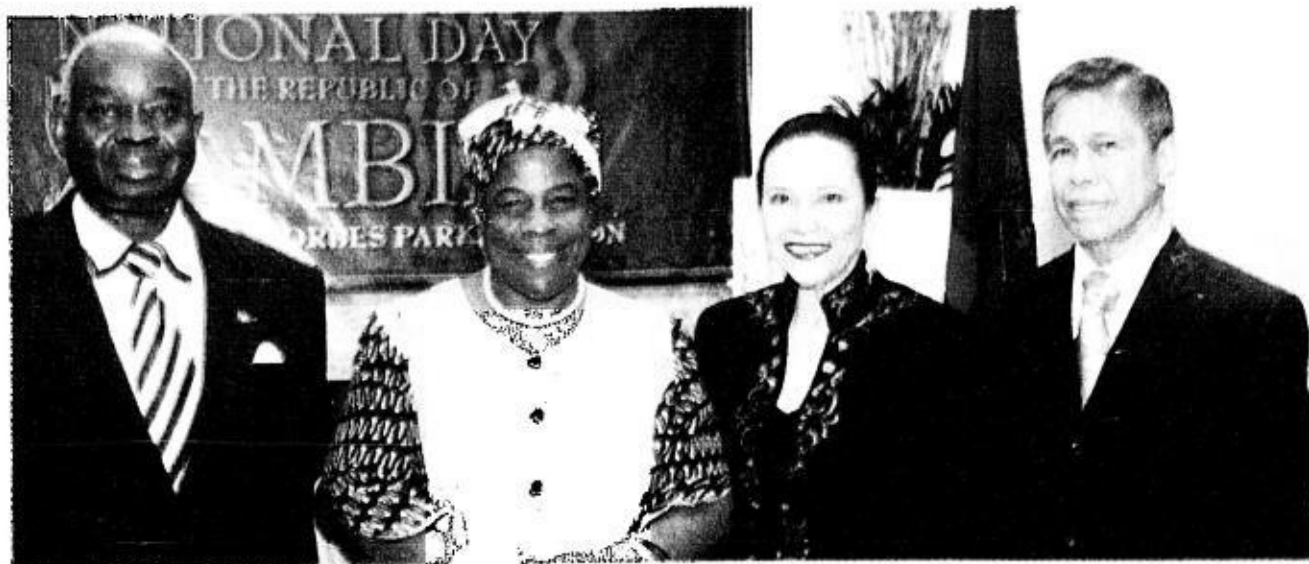


DAVID Ghiyam: "The body changes but the soul is immortal, going on from one life to the other until it reaches its full correction. We have karmic sets and we have to take full responsibility for it."



Bonding sa Buhay Coke Buksan Mo





AMBASSADOR Godfrey and Sibeso Simasiku of the Republic of Zambia with hosts consul of Guatemala Mellie Romero Ablaza and husband consul of Zambia Luis I. Ablaza Jr.



CONSUL Evie Costa, Consul Joseph Assad, Connie Garcia and Alice Guerrero



SOUTH African Ambassador Pieter and Chrisma Vermeulen



FIRST Secretary Jetty Mwamba



LIFESTYLE's Anna Sobrepeña with consul of Monaco Fortune Ledesma



CONSUL of Angola Helen Ong and Mita Rufino



CONSUL Tony Rufino, Consul Gen. Jose Oramas (Mexico), Ambassador Abdulla a. Al-Mutawah (Qatar), Consul Gen. M. Issam El Debs (Syria), and Counselor Jan Janda (Czech Republic)



ANDY and Teresita Liboro with Mabel Abano

Zambia marks 43rd anniversary of independence day



JB LEONOR and wife Gina Ocampo Leonor with their son Adriel Martin O. Leonor, being baptized by Bishop Federico Escaler



VICKY Merchadesch, Dina Leonor-Villasor, Rean Villasor, Fran Ribano, JB Leonor, Maxine Chua, Jarie Garcia and Mary Faye Garcia



LETTY Bonoan, hosts Nene and Jun Leonor, and Tony Bonoan. Standing: Olga Santos, Fe Rodriguez, Bong Santos and Cess Rodriguez



GLOBE Telecom's Enterprise Business Group managers Jay Perez, Armi Malaluan, Lery Briones, and Gina and Anika Leonor



LULU Trinidad-Ocampo.



THE FUN PACK. Rem Zamora, Gina and JB Leonor. Seated: Tina Jurado, Boompoy Martel, Pinky Amador and Jonjon Rufino

BUSINESS MAGNATE AND vintage car collector, well respected Luis I. Ablaza Jr., Zambia's honorary consul in the Philippines, hosted a super nice reception to mark the 43rd anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Zambia.

Ambassador Godfrey Simasiku, Zambia ambassador to Japan who is also accredited to the Philippines, jetted into town just for this event, dahlings, held at the Forbes Park Pavilion in Makati.

Over 100 invitees attended including ambassadors based in Manila, representatives of different international organizations and honorary consuls of several countries.

Needless to say, Ambassador Simasiku was delighted with the presence of hotshot dignitaries.

Speaking before dinner was served, Ambassador Simasiku, a peace advocate, said: "No matter how rich a country can be, without peace, it is all in vain as it cannot attract investors."

He encouraged the Philippines to invest and visit various tourist destinations in Zambia. *Après* the speech, Consul Ablaza showed Zambia's magnificent tourist attractions in a video travelogue, *palanggas*.

Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin of the Department of Foreign Affairs delivered a congratulatory message to President Levy Mwanawasa from President Macapagal-Arroyo, *natch*. The undersecretary hailed "the bilateral relations between the Philippines and Zambia."

Naturellement, the hostess with the mostest, Consul Mellie Romero Ablaza, meticulously organized this happening and, together with her children, entertained the invitees like forever, *palanggas*.

Baptism & birthday

Young, popular couple Junboy "JB" Leonor and wife, pretty Gina Ocampo L., hosted a super fun dinner party to celebrate the baptism of their newly born son Adriel Martin and the third birthday of their eldest daughter Anika.

The celebration was held at the sprawling garden of the eye-catching Leonor compound in Pasay.

Bishop Federico Escaler, a close relative of Gina L., *palanggas*, officiated in the baptismal rites that took place at the Shrine of Jesus the Way the Truth & the Life on Macapagal Highway. A Mass followed at the garden of the Leonors.

Since Junboy L. is a member of the hot The Dawn band, as expected, there were loads of hip, young movers and shakers celebrating with him, dahlings. Plus pals of his parents, Tatler's hostess with the mostest Nene Santos Leonor and businessman Jun Leonor, *natch*.

The fun afternoon affair had the invitees digging into the superb Japanese dishes prepared by Noel Hizon of 1004 Enterprises like sushi, California maki, cream cheese avocado maki, spicy tuna roll, kami salad in cucumber cups, Japanese siomai, tofu steak, ebi tempura, beef sukiyaki, yakitori and Japanese fried rice. Yummy!

And for extras, check this out, international and Spanish dishes from Nene Leonor's well-known kitchen: turkey, *lechon*, paella, lengua, lasagna, callos, *lapu-lapu* filler and salad.

A table was filled with calorific cakes and pastries that had some of the health con-

scious guests promising to sweat out till they drop the following day the additional inches to the hips, dahlings.

Casual dining with style

They have earned the respect of colleagues and patrons alike with their dedication and great talents. Now, they are creating quite a stir in the restaurant circle with their opening of another restaurant.

Larry Cortez and chef Mauro Arjona, the dynamic tandem behind the wildly popular Duo Steakhouse and Wine Bar in Serendra and pioneers in Le Soufflé Restaurant in Makati, have added another feather to their caps with the opening of Chefs' Quarter Brasserie & Wine Bar at the ground floor of the new Midtown wing of Robinson's Place on M. Adriatico corner Pedro Gil Streets in Ermita, Manila.

Larry C. said: "The menu may be tagged as fine dining, but the prices are quite affordable. We'd like to attract more patrons to enjoy good food without compromising quality. To do this, we've distinguished the restaurant as a casual yet elegant dining

place."

Chefs' Quarter can accommodate 80 diners inside and 100 in the al fresco dining area.

Expect Chefs' Quarters to be the next great foodie and gourmet destination this part of town. With the tried-and-tested team of Larry and chef Mau, each with nearly 20 years of experience in the business, casual but subtly stylish dining may become in vogue.

For reservations, call 3813449 or 3817716 or e-mail chefsquarter@yahoo.com. Parking slots are available at the basement of the new Robinson's Midtown Mall.

WITHOUT BATTLING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare system



floor of the new Midtown wing of Robinson's Place on M. Adriatico corner Pedro Gil Streets in Ermita, Manila.

Larry C. said: "The menu may be tagged as fine dining, but the prices are quite affordable. We'd like to attract more patrons to enjoy good food without compromising quality. To do this, we've distinguished the restaurant as a casual yet elegant dining

DONNIE Ramirez and brilliant Freddie Olbes



BABYLYN Decena-Newfield, Vina Lauren Castro, Jeffrey Decena and Von Lawrence Castro



MABUHAY Magazine's Ira Inquimboy and Camille Quintos



CRIS Vitug, Rocky and Lalaine Mallari, Ernie Garcia and Romano Vasquez



GUEST of honor Imelda Marcos



CHEFS' Quarter frontliners John Ivan Inquimboy, Larry Cortez, Dr. Caridad Molino, Dr. Elisa Tiu, chef Mau Arjona, Jr. and chef Edgardo Pesueña

Second pink bazaar a bigger success

ICANSERVE'S TICKLED PINK 2 charity bazaar was bigger than last year's and had a larger crowd.

Held at Rockwell Tent in Makati, this year's event had more sellers and was visited by over 1,000 people.

Bijoux, Bettina Osmeña's own line of export-quality jewelry, was among the event's crowd-drawers.

Osmeña chairs ICanServe's fundraising committee. She co-organized Tickled Pink 2 with ICanServe volunteers Ria Romero and Ina Vergel de Dios, who is also a survivor, and ICanServe president Kara Magsanoc-Alipala.

Actress, breast-cancer survivor and ICanServe volunteer Maritoni Fernandez presented her Save the Susus T-shirt and bag line.

shirt and bag line.

Camille Genuino's C + G designer clothing enjoyed brisk sales, as did Eva Abesamis' Marie Antoinette-inspired tops, along with V-Clothing and La Copa.

Works by accessory designers like Ginger Mirasol, exporters Avatar, Legacy Crafts, Le Font and Silverbox were also popular. The trademark fresh brew of 18 Days Coffee proved to be a treat. The Farm at San Benito provided an oasis of quiet amid the hustle and bustle.

Tickled Pink gave breast-cancer survivors a most welcome opportunity to meet and give solace to "sisters" in treatment and women needing information on breast care and health. ICanServe provided patients with free books, audio and video materials, counseling, on-

line support, early breast-cancer screening programs, and subsidy for treatments.

Volunteers Crisann Celdran, Sheila Cruz, Abby Tan, Pamsy Tioseco, Liza dela Cruz, Mari-fior Aunario, and Melissa de

Leon-Joseph gave referrals and offered words of encouragement and hope to other survivors, especially newly diagnosed patients.

The Carewell Community, a nonprofit foundation that links

with ICanServe for patient and caregiver services, offered bandannas, scarves, and other cancer-survivor necessities. Carewell managing director Robert Suintay said it was their best bazaar ever.

This year's tremendous public response reaffirmed the breast-cancer community's faith in ICanServe's dedication to providing women with life-saving information, and breast-cancer survivors with hope.

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CELEBRATE A COCA-COLA CHRISTMAS

Christmas won't be complete without a family Noche Buena, and Coke makes this salu-salo even more special by enlivening meals and making family bonding warmer.

This Coke Christmas Spirit lived on as the Coca-Cola Caravan traversed various cities and barangays this December to celebrate family Christmas cheer and bonding. Decked in bright Christmas lights and carrying loads of fun and games with it, the Christmas Caravan toured different cities and barangays to liven up the holidays.

With fun activities, games and prizes, it's successful Baguio leg garnered close to 40,000 visitors. And because it toured other cities and barangays in GMA as well as the rest of Luzon, the Coke Caravan has touched hundreds of thousands of people during this Christmas season.

But aside from that, Coke brings you the Coca-Cola Kasalo sa Pasko Promo which would surely be a Christmas treat for every family. Just buy Coke Litro and look under the cap to see if it's one of the winning Kasalo Caps. Then present the winning Kasalo Cap, along with 4 red Litro caps, to redeem special Kasalo Spoon and Fork collectibles at participating sari-sari stores and public markets nationwide. As of December 2, close to half a million cutlery sets have been redeemed and millions more to be given away until the redemption period ends on February 21, 2008.

With sets of Kasalo Spoons and Forks, and Coke Litro you're sure to have a splendid dining experience every day of the year.

Bonding sa Buhay, Bukas Mo



Bonding sa Buhay, Coke Bukas Mo



Reinvent your lifestyle this Christmas

By Mitch Felipe

TODAY YOU CELEBRATE the season with your family.

It is expected that you will set aside healthy issues today since the season comes only once a year and you want to take a break.

But this is also the perfect time to think about reinventing yourself and your lifestyle for next year.

Take advantage of this opportunity to see how your family and loved ones play a major role in who you are and what kind of lifestyle you have right now.

Read your environment

As you get together with your family and relatives, try to observe their behaviors. You might be able to relate to the way they eat and the food they chose to prepare for the celebration.

Look at your dining table and check how many pork dishes were prepared. Can you still count the desserts that were

prepared? Now look how your family eats *lechon*. Did they trim the fat, just ate the skin or finished everything? How similar is it to the way you eat *lechon*?

If only parents can start to practice more what they preach about healthy and active lifestyle, then they will not be annoyed when their kids spend longer hours watching television or playing computer games while eating junk foods, instead of enjoying sports.

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory states that most behavior is learned by observing another person's behavior rather than reinforcement of one's own behavior.

You initially adopt a behavior not because there is a reward linked to exercise or eating healthy, for instance, but because you see that your role model is fit and healthy.

When I was young, my parents did not exert much effort to let me realize the importance of an active lifestyle. But I saw their concern for their bodies and heard their conversations about taking care of their health.

Those were the strongest influences I got from them and they were much better than being forced to be concerned about my health.

Reflect on your past

How your parents brought you up as a kid may explain your lifestyle. Were you often exposed to high-calorie foods at home like ice cream or *chicharon*? Did your parents' buying behaviors in the supermarket make you believe it was harmless to fill up a grocery cart with cookies, potato chips, chocolates and candies?

Environment plays a major role in developing a person's lifestyle. Environmental control techniques like choosing healthier foods to keep at home and gradually eliminating non-nutritious snacks are initial steps to a healthy lifestyle modification.

On the other hand, deprivation in the past will not help. I have a client who was brought up by her mom to eat the healthiest foods you can ever imagine. She was not permitted to eat junk foods or chocolates.

When my client was given

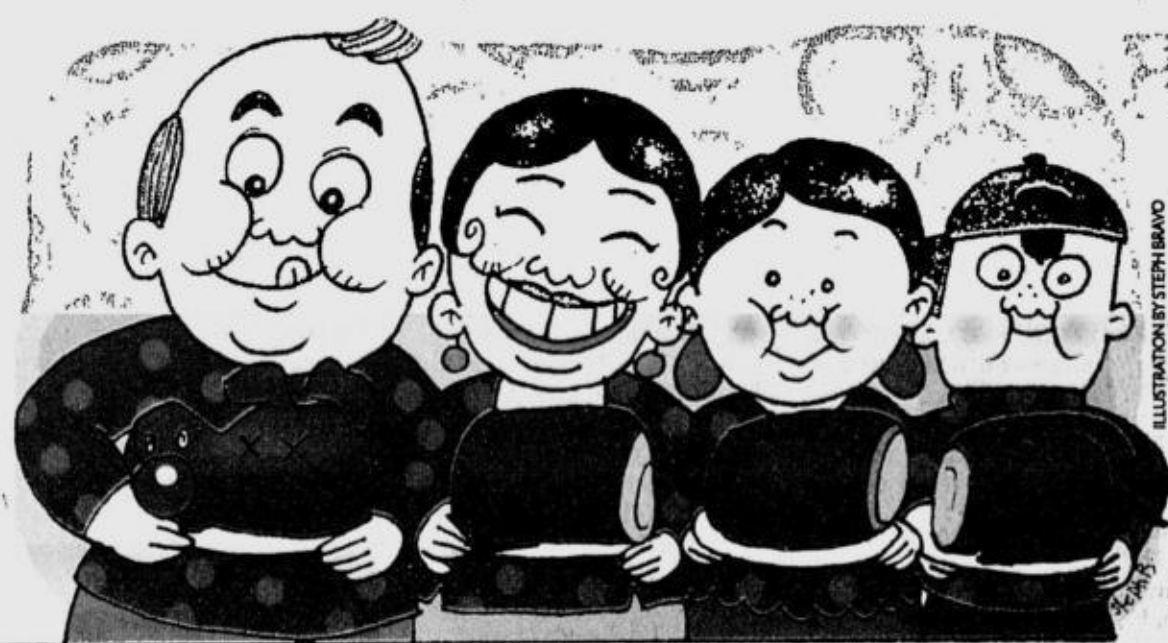


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAWO

her daily allowance, she would secretly buy all the fatty stuffs in their cafeteria until she gained weight.

Moderation is key to effective lifestyle management. Just a little bite of a brownie or a cheesecake will do no harm. Also, awareness of the consequences of a particular behavior can help you plan. If you are aware that a slice of an 18-inch pizza is equivalent to 700-800 calories and you just burned 400 calories in an hour-long dance class, would you finish the slice, remove some of the toppings or forget about it?

Renew your thinking

Now that you have realized how your environment and

your past have affected your lifestyle, recognize that it is not too late to make a change. Reinvent yourself today and choose to be a role model to everyone by embracing a healthy and active lifestyle.

One of the best things we can hear from someone is a thank you for affecting their lives positively. And one of the best gifts we can give someone is to help them change their lives. It is more valuable than the expensive Christmas gifts we bought this season. We are making our contributions to the lifestyle change of another individual.

Influence your family by choosing healthier food alternatives instead of your usual high-fat meals. Make time for physical

activities instead of staying long in front of the television.

Change your perspective. Realize that excellence at work includes not just meeting company expectations but also achieving better relationships and, most importantly, influencing everyone to live a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

Share your successes with others by relating to them how you lost a lot of weight this year, how you recovered from a health problem or what steps you make to take fitness to the next level.

Have a merry, healthy Christmas!

For comments or questions e-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

Law of Compensation

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licaucó

THIS IS ANOTHER HIDDEN law of nature not mentioned in "The Secret."

This law states, "Whatever you do will come back to you, nothing less, nothing more." It is also known by various names, such as The Law of Cause and Effect, or Karma, or Law of Universal Justice.

The American psychic and prophet, Edgar Cayce, put it simply as "meeting yourself."

This law is absolute, perfect, objective and resolute. It works whether we are aware of it or not, whether we like it or not. It is a natural law, just as the law of gravity is.

Karma, by which this hidden

law is known in the East, is a Sanskrit word that means action. Usually, when we talk of action we refer to physical action. But in the case of karma action can also refer to mental actions, such as "desires, choices and intentions."

Karma is more strict than human or man-made laws. If I intend or desire to kill you, for example, even if I do not actually do it, I have already incurred a karmic debt to you that I must pay in the future.

It matters not that I did not act on it. The harm has already been done on the spiritual or mental level. And that must be compensated or paid for.

The reason for this is that everything begins with the mind. Nothing exists on the physical plane that did not originate on the mental plane. Therefore, the mental is as real as the physical.

Perhaps this explains the biblical passage in which Jesus Christ said: "It is written, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' but I say unto you: whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with

her in his heart."

Mental action can bring about karmic consequences, as much as physical action does.

A mother of four came to my class on Soulmates, Karma and Reincarnation, where I conduct two hypnotic regressions to help participants remember their past lives.

This woman could not understand why she hated her second son. She would punish him for the slightest fault or in-

fraction but not the others who did a similar offense. She was feeling guilty about her attitude toward the boy.

During regression, she found herself in a previous life in Africa as a slave. The slaves had a master who was very cruel and would whip or punish them for the slightest excuse.

She hated that cruel slave master so much that she cursed him and said she would always hate him and never forgive him. Now this slave master came as her son. She now has the opportunity to exact her revenge against him or to forgive what he did to her.

She chose to forgive and

soon, the relationship with her second son improved so much. Had she chosen to continue her hatred the cycle would continue.

Karma is the immutable law that refers effects back to their rightful causes. Everything comes back to its source. It has been said by a physicist that if you throw a stone up in the sky and if there is nothing to obstruct its path, it will eventually come back to your hand where it originated. That is the law of karma at work.

Everything we do will come back to us in full measure, nothing less and nothing more.

Healthy dessert

PEOPLE WITH A sweet tooth can satisfy their craving for sugar and help keep their heart and body healthy.

All they have to do is use healthy ingredients like oats when making dessert. It will taste flavorful and provide nutrients to keep the heart healthy.

Oats are an excellent source of soluble fiber. They help lower cholesterol levels, manage diabetes, and keep the blood pressure at a healthy level.

Oats also help in weight management, giving people the feeling of fullness for a longer period of time.

Nesvita Oatmeal shares some easy-to-do recipes:

Banana Oatmeal Choco Muffin

Ingredients:
2 35-g pack Nesvita Oatmeal
Chocolat 3 in 1
1 c all-purpose flour
1/3 c granulated sugar
1/3 c cocoa
2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp baking soda
2 pc ripe banana *lacatan*, mashed
1 c Nestlé Fresh Milk

5 tbsp butter, melted
1 pc egg, lightly beaten
1 tsp vanilla
Melted chocolate for garnish
1. Pre-heat oven to 400°F.
2. Arrange paper baking cups on a muffin pan. Set aside.

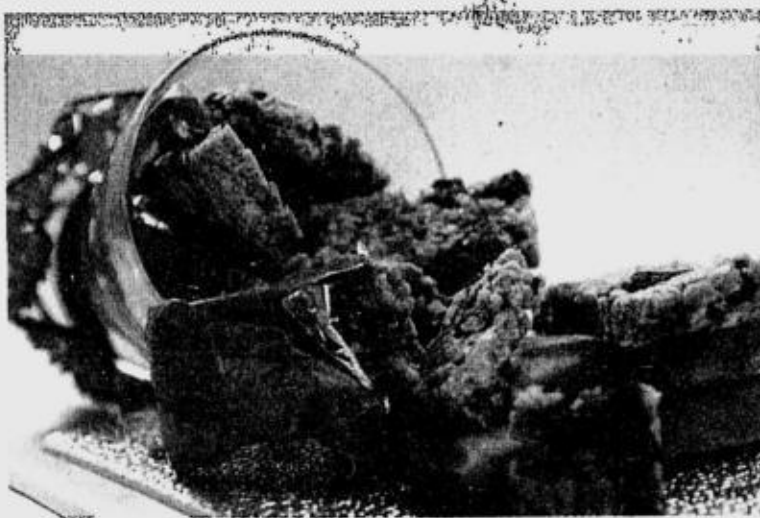
3. In a bowl, combine flour, Nesvita Oatmeal, sugar, cocoa, baking powder and baking soda. Mix well. Set aside.

4. In a separate bowl, combine mashed banana, milk, melted butter, egg and vanilla. Blend well then add to dry ingredients. Stir just until dry ingredients are moistened.

5. Transfer mixture into the prepared paper cups until almost full.



NUTTY Granola Bars



BANANA Oatmeal Choco Muffin

6. Bake 10-12 minutes or until an inserted toothpick in the center comes out clean.

Cool muffins on a wire rack. Drizzle or decorate with melted chocolate if desired.

Nutty Granola Bars

Ingredients:
2 35-g pack Nesvita Oatmeal
Original
1/2 c toasted chopped cashew nuts
1/2 c whole toasted peanuts
1/2 c chocolate chips
1/2 c raisins
1/2 c assorted dried fruits
1/2 c honey
1/4 c packed brown sugar
1/4 c butter
2 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 c peanut butter
1 c white marshmallows

Pinch of salt

1. In a bowl, combine oatmeal, nuts, chocolate chips and dried fruits. Set aside.

2. Combine in a heavy bottom pan honey, sugar, butter, vanilla extract, peanut butter and marshmallows.

3. Cook over slow heat while stirring continuously.

4. When sugar and marshmallows are completely dissolved, stir in the prepared oatmeal-nuts mixture.

5. Stir well until fully incorporated.

6. Transfer mixture into a lightly buttered baking pan. Let cool.

7. When cool enough to handle, cut into squares.

8. Wrap in cellophane or plastic wraps and store in an airtight container until ready to serve.

A gift to yourself

BEFORE THE SEASON OF giving ends, you may want to give something to yourself or your organization by augmenting your finances through the sale of Nature's Blessings products.

The company has an ongoing "Give a Gift of Health and Increase your Wealth" promo.

You can become a regular direct distributor of Nature's Blessings with an initial one case purchase of Virgin Coconut Oil products at 50 percent discount.

You get the best-selling "Virgin Coconut Oil, Nature's Miracle Medicine" book for free.

Nature's Blessings is a pio-

neer in the production of organic virgin coconut oil.

As of 2007, Nature's Blessings has the only coconut plantation certified as organic by the Global Organic Alliance. It is also registered with the Bureau of Food and Drugs.

Nature's Blessings Organic VCO and other coconut health and beauty products are available through direct distributorship. Those who wish to join the MLM distributorship may visit www.nbnetworking.com.ph or its offices at unit C, Penthouse, Padilla Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Ave. (formerly Emerald Ave.), Ortigas Center, Pasig City (tel. nos 6355030; 6319443 and 8284916).



NATURE's Blessings' coconut health and beauty products

Unlocking the mysteries of the heart and soul

From page C1

all of the different ways a person could live connected to God. Kabbalah does not say the Bible is wrong or a verse is not right, he explained.

The Zohar unlocks the codes and makes practical sense of what the Bible is saying. By unlocking the codes, people become better Christians.

But for people to receive the gifts they were meant to receive,

they should first earn those gifts. Hence the transformation of the negatives into positive forces in our lives. Easier said than done, of course.

When something goes awry or out of control or is even painful, we shrug it off and say that's just the way life is, Ghyiam said.

But life, he said, is not meant to be painful. Pain existed because our work is not yet done. It is fundamental in molding us

to become better persons.

"Each of us has a negative tendency—jealousies, insecurities, fears. In society it is always 'I have pain in my life because you hurt me.' It's not that people are hurting you. These are energies coming back to you because you started them," he said.

People have to own up to responsibilities, Ghyiam said. There is no randomness in life. He said every second of the day we plant seeds for our future

through our thoughts, words and action.

A negative feed will naturally yield a negative future. Studying Kabbalah, he said, would equip us with the tools to make positive changes.

The hardest part, he said, is letting go of the ego—much harder than overcoming your "kingdom."

Many people, he continued, are even shocked to learn they have egos.

"Acknowledging that you have an ego is a big step. After that, it is realizing you have a soul true to the Creator. Transform the negative energy and allow the soul to shine. We ultimately have to become like the Creator, a being of sharing," he said.

Ghyiam said Kabbalah enhanced lives. It will give you the ability to control your life and not be controlled; to be the creator of your movie and not be the created; gain a greater un-

derstanding of what is actually happening; remove randomness as you learn to connect the dots.

The old spiritual faith, he said, will start to make sense. "There is not one question that a student of Kabbalah cannot answer," Ghyiam promised.

Call/text 0922-7681040 for the schedule of Kabbalah teachings.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

Breast-cancer screening goes digital

ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER'S women's cancer screenings packages now include digital mammography.

St. Luke's Breast Center has acquired a Siemens Mammomat Nova-tion digital mammography machine. The new technology employed in the machine produces improved image quality, allows the use of lower X-ray doses, reduces excessive breast compression, and improves access to test results.

The state-of-the-art technology is now included in the In the Pink of Health package.

The St. Luke's package is a breast-and gynecologic-cancer screening offering that consists of expert-recommended screening tests to detect pre-cancer, or early-stage cancer of the breast, cervix and ovaries.

Offered by the St. Luke's Cancer Institute, Department of Obstetrics and

Gynecology, Women's Healthcare Unit, and Breast Center, through the Wellness Program Office, the In the Pink of Health Package includes: clinical examination, pap smear, transvaginal and breast ultrasound, and mammography.

With the inclusion of digital mammography technology to the St. Luke's Breast Center, patients will get a digital mammogram instead of the conventional mammogram if they avail of In the Pink of Health Package 1, at its original price of P6,200.

The In the Pink of Health package without mammography (Package 2) is available at the original cost of P4,500.

Like conventional mammography, digital (computerized) mammography also uses X-rays to produce detailed images of the breast. But digital mammography records the breast image digitally into a computer.

The image is captured using a special electronic X-ray detector that converts the image into a digital picture. The digital picture can then be viewed on a computer monitor.

"The digital technology fully automates almost all aspects of the mammography process. The system is so sensitive that less radiation is used.

"The system even automatically calculates the exact amount of radiation required so the quality of the breast image is optimized while avoiding unnecessary radiation overexposure. The system also measures the amount of compression to the breast for better image quality and comfort," says Dr. Alejandro Dizon, head of St. Luke's Breast Center.

Magnification, orientation, brightness and contrast can be digitally adjusted to help physicians clearly see certain areas of the breast, as well as

to highlight breast problems better. This means more accurate detection of breast cancer, fewer retakes and configurable image transfer.

The new machine also features a new computerized compression technique. The system ensures that over-compression is avoided. The system compresses only as long as the breast is soft and pliable, and then stops at the point of optimal compression.

It has sensors and mechanisms to slow down the compression plate and then adjust the speed according to compression resistance. This allows for more convenient positioning and more comfort at maximum image quality.

Among women with no symptoms, it is recommended that a breast examination be done by a skilled health professional every three years for those aged 20-39, and annually for

those 40 and older. Starting at age 45, women should have annual mammography. Women at higher risk of breast cancer can start early.

Self-examination of the breast should start as soon as women reach puberty to increase awareness of their breasts for early detection.

St. Luke's Wellness Office is at the G/F Main Building, SLMC; 7231206, 7230101 loc. 5527/5528, 8496963.

BONDING WITH THE FOLKS!

A guide to hosting a great family reunion this Christmas

No other occasion brings family and relatives (even to the nth degree!) together like Christmas. But Christmas time also can cause a lot of pressure, especially when dealing with relatives you have not met for a long time, and children who treat you like a stranger and vice versa. Here's a guide to have a closer, happier Yuletide season with the whole family:

Do some research. Before organizing a family get-together, it's best to do some pre-work. Does your Tito need a special diet and can't eat ham? How many kids does your cousin have? Will you need more kiddie treats or dishes for the grown-ups? Will you need to rent more chairs? These simple considerations are important to ensure that you make your guests feel welcome at home.

Bring out the photo album. Any photo of people in an 80s outfit may bring out the orange factor, but believe it or not, old photos get the interest of anyone, young or old. For the older relatives, it's a way to reminisce on the good old times. For the younger kids, it's the way for them to see how you are connected to their side of the family. They'll be exclaiming "hey, this is you with my mom!" and immediately warm up to the family association.

Potluck! One way to bond with relatives you have not met for a long time is to ask them for their specialty dish. Not only will this make things easy for your budget, it also lets your Tita, Ninang or Cousin showcase her culinary pride. Other members of your family will also appreciate sampling a specialty dish they're not accustomed to, and will get the ball rolling into getting to know one another.

Serve to the shy ones first. While some relatives would attack food with gusto, older folks and small kids usually take some prodding before they head to the dinner table. Warm up to them by offering an appetizer, or by literally taking their hand and guiding them to the table. This ensures that they would get to sample every dish, even the ones that get gobbled up fast.

Ease the Tension. There's no bigger celebration pooper than having differences with other family members. Remind them that this is not the venue to settle scores, to bicker or even air the dirty laundry. So when serving to bickering relatives, make sure that you as the host, are in neutral ground. Give them both the importance, and the space, to adjust to each other. And while it is nice to think of a reconciliation (which does not always happen), the best to hope for is that a nice meal and a cold drink would cool their heads, and give them something more positive to focus on.

Pass the glass. Once you run out of things to say, you can still connect with family members by offering them a drink. True to the adage "actions speak louder than words", handing a glass of Coke lets guests feel welcome, and very much part of your family.



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Bonding
sa Buhay **Coke** Buksan Mo™

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WORLD OF FENG SHUI

TRIVIA 17: The Competitors in the Chinese zodiac include the Rat, the Monkey and which other animal?
ANS: a Dragon b Boar c Sheep d Snake
To join, email your GLOBE Online subscribers simply have to submit a con- tains registration by saying in THE RED REG "contestant+age+gender" (Ex: THE RED REG Dora By Gold SL, Makina City2007) and send it to 2851 To answer send THESS <letter> to 2851
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INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Saving grace

IT IS TIME TO RESCUE YOURSELF from the onslaught of daily living.

Staying informed is paramount to staying ahead. Saving elements in your life that are part and parcel of who you are complete you in ways you cannot even imagine.

Perhaps you are guilty of ignorance, negligence or apathy. But fear not, here is a rescue list. So let's get started on your mission to save yourself.

Energy-robbers

Actually, the more accurate term is energy vampires. These are real people that surround us and have the uncanny ability to steal our energy.

Example: You get regular phone calls from a friend who never stops complaining about the same thing or situation. Almost instinctively, s/he calls you, unloading all the hurts and pains accumulated over a lifetime.

Your boss' irritable/angry nature can also get you down.

Or it may be someone you see

every day, exposing you to his/her never-has-nothing-nice-to-say-about-anybody character? All these negatives take away energy from you.

Energy-saving tip: Distance yourself from people and/or situations that are negative. If this cannot be avoided, lessen your exposure immediately.

Or you can turn the situation around by simply saying, "Would your life change if you adopted a more positive attitude?"

Experts in natural health claim that if a negative person touches you, the negativity can transfer to you. The result? A feeling of debilitation or exhaustion.

Sure-shot energy boosters are daily moderate exercise, 6-8 hours of sleep and a balanced diet.

Skin savers

Who says we have to age like our parents? Modern anti-aging approaches are here, so rejoice. But, before anything else, con-

sider the view that to look good on the outside, you have to take care of the inside.

The antioxidant army is here to keep your skin and complexion young and supple. Consider these basics as part of your daily regimen:

Vitamin A - 5,000 IUs
Vitamin E - 400 IUs
Vitamin C - 1,000 mg, 2X daily

Grape seed extract - 1 tablet
Co-enzyme Q10 - 30mg
Alpha-lipoic acid - 50 mg

Note: If your protein intake is low (protein is essential to proper heart functioning), then take COQ10.

Another valuable tip is to stay away from the sun unless you are wearing a sunblock (SPF-30, minimum). When you notice that you have fine lines, wrinkles, sun-damaged and sagging skin due to loss of firmness, it is time to increase your Vitamin C supplements.

There are many forms of Vitamin C—ascorbic acid, sodium

ascorbate and ester-C. Always take this antioxidant after a full meal.

Remember that, while animals can produce their own Vitamin C, humans cannot. Therefore, it is important that you include this as part of your vitamin regimen. Vitamin C boosts the immune system, is essential to the health of the nervous system and provides energy to the body.

Heart lift

That is right. Your heart needs a lift. Basic to your health is a physical heart that is cared for and an emotional heart that is

nurtured.

Here is how to give your heart a lift. The mineral supplement magnesium and the antioxidant co-enzyme Q10 are two musts on your heart checklist.

Next, exercise via power walking daily for 30-45 minutes. Stay calm. Studies have shown that people with bad tempers and are constantly irritable put a heavy stress on the heart.

Practice the art of slow breathing anywhere you are and any chance you get. Whenever you feel the burden of stress bearing down on you, do this:

Calming affirmation and visualization:

Listen to relaxing music or just embrace your silence. Sometimes, tuning in to nature sounds (birds chirping, water running, etc.) can easily put you in a state of calm.

Repeat to yourself, "I am centered, focused and grounded. Nothing and no one can shake me."

Now imagine you are a mighty and graceful narra tree. Your roots firmly settled in the Earth.

Love and light!
Reference: "The Wrinkle Cure" by Nicholas Perricone, MD



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BARBO



Moisturizing from head to toe

THE NEW DOVE SKIN CARE Range has all the moisturizing milk you need to achieve well-nourished, radiant and glowing skin.

Dove's Beauty Bars do wonders for cleansing the body. With an improved bar shape, packaging and mild formulation, Dove Beauty Bars have been proven to be good for all skin types. Each contains the ¼ moisturizing milk that leaves skin soft and smooth and is gentle enough even for babies.

All Beauty Bar variants—the White Beauty Bar, Pink Beauty Bar, Exfoliating Beauty Bar Soap, and Extra Sensitive—are sure to heighten your enjoyment of shower time. For those with extra sensitive skin, be sure to try the Dove Extra Sensitive Variant which is 100-percent fragrance free, pH neutral and free of any dyes.

Dove's range of moisturizing body washes has the soothing

scent and calming effects of cucumber and green tea. A new addition to the Dove family is the Gentle Exfoliating Beauty Body Wash, which contains micro beads to clear away dull skin, gently removing dead skin and pore-clogging dirt.

To complete your moisturizing bath, end with the most delicate part of the body: your face. Dove Facial Foams come in three different variants that cater to all skin types. The Dove

Softening Facial Foam, Dove Fresh Moisture Facial Foam and the Gentle Exfoliating Facial Foam.

With Dove's Beauty Body Moisturizers, your skin will stay moisturized anywhere, rain or shine.

Dove's Anti-Perspirants, meanwhile, are designed to keep you fresh and dry all day. With Dove's Original stick or Roll-on and Dove Fresh Touch Variant, no need to worry about flaky and dark underarms.



Holiday pampering

BLUEWATER DAY SPA PRESENTS its Spa Party package for the holidays. It's the perfect way to celebrate the season and party with your friends—minus the stress.

Just gather your friends and visit any Bluewater Day Spa branch for your favorite spa services. Enjoy a soothing body massage, a special facial treatment or a relaxing foot spa.

You can also indulge in Bluewater's pampering body scrubs and body wraps. Or you can have fun having your toes and nails painted with cool nail art designs complete with studs and rhinestones.

For a maximum three-hour exclusive use of the spa, customers can avail themselves

of free refreshments, plus cake, sandwiches and drinks for groups who accumulate at least P10,000 worth of spa services. Those who get at least P20,000 worth of spa services will enjoy free cake, sandwiches, pasta and drinks.

It's Bluewater Day Spa's way of giving everyone a fun, relaxed and refreshing season. And it's the perfect time to bond with friends and celebrate the merriest season of the year.

This special offering doesn't apply to special promos and packages.

Call 8173126, 7235534 or 9272258; visit www.bluewaterdayspa.com

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DAYBREAK
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MAHABA-HABANG INUMAN... MAHABA-HABANG PARTY!
FEATURING UK'S LEGENDARY HOUSE DJ PETE HELLER
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PAPI SANTOS, MANOLET DARIO AND ELMER DADO.

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Guess who's coming this Christmas

By Florino A. Francisco, MD
Contributor

AS A YOUNG PEDIATRIC resident at the Brooklyn Jewish Medical Center in New York City in the mid-'60s, I used to attend Sunday services at the Marble Collegiate Church corner of Fifth Avenue and 29th Street in Manhattan.

Listening to the sermon of its resident minister, Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, was always a moving spiritual experience for me. He was the author of the best-selling book "The Power of Positive Thinking" and was dubbed America's Minister to Millions in his lifetime.

Each Sunday morning, one would find a long queue of worshippers stretching along three blocks of the fashionable avenue, all waiting to be seated inside the church. They came from all over America and countries. They were in New York just to listen to Peale's 15-minute sermon.

I would never forget his sermon on Christmas Day in 1967. It is said Reverend Peale had, for 35 years, always quoted the same old poem in every Christmas sermon he preached at the Marble Collegiate Church.

That particular Christmas morning, the altar was decorated with banks of exquisite red poinsettias that gave the church the magical glow of Christmas.

The poem, "How the Great Guest Came," was written by the famous poet Edwin Markham.

It tells the story of a poor cobbler named Conrad. He was known in his village as a righteous and kindhearted man. One night Conrad dreamt Jesus Christ was going to visit him the very next day.

The dream was so vivid the cobbler prepared for the visit of the Great Guest. He decorated his humble shop with beautiful evergreens and bought the most delicious foods he could get in the market.

The poem says:

*He lived the moments o'er and o'er,
When the Lord should enter the lowly door—*

*The knock, the call, the latch pulled up,
The lighted face, the offered cup.
He would wash the feet where the spikes had been,*

*He would kiss the hands where the nails went in,
And then at the last would sit with Him*

And break the bread as the day grew dim.

It would be the greatest day in Conrad's life! The hours flew so fast. Shortly after noon, an old beggar came. His feet were bruised and bloody and his shoes were already worn out.

Conrad gave the beggar a sturdy pair of shoes. A little while later, an old woman came by, tired and hungry, with a bundle of firewood on her back. Conrad fed the hungry stranger and gave her a loaf of bread to take.

Then, at dusk, a little boy came to his door, lost and afraid. Conrad took the crying child in his arms, gave him milk to drink and asked him where he lived. He took the child home to the anxious mother.

It was already dark when Conrad got home. Suddenly, he felt sad that the Great Guest he was expecting did not come.

The poem continues:
*Why is it, Lord, that Your feet delay?
Did you forget that this was the day?
Then, soft in the silence a Voice was heard:*

*Lift up your heart, for I kept My word.
Three times I came to your friendly door,
Three times My Shadow was on your floor;*

*I was the beggar with bruised feet;
I was the woman you gave to eat;
I was the child of the homeless street.*

In this day and age when people's inhumanity to others still persists here and in many parts of the world, what could be a better reminder of the true spirit of Christmas than this story about the Great Guest?

Holiday fun in RP's biggest mall

THE HOLIDAY SEASON AT SM MALL OF Asia recently kicked off with the lighting of the 48-foot Giant Christmas Tree at the Main Mall Atrium.

The tree glows with gold and red metallic balls, giant silk poinsettias, and strands of LED lights. Gift boxes wrapped in lame at its base highlight the spirit of giving.

Shoppers can do their share for the less fortunate this season with the Bear for Charity campaign, undertaken with Toy Kingdom and Cartoon Network.

Purchase teddy bears at P99 only, either at the store or at the TK booth, and the teddy bears will be distributed to less fortunate kids at the SM Mall of Asia on Christmas Day.

The Cartoon Network's Snowville, which is ongoing until Dec. 30, has transformed the mall atrium into a winter wonderland of sorts where kids can have snow fun with the Snowman, ride the sleigh or have great photo-ops at the Snowville murals.

Girls can enjoy fun and fashion at the Barbie booth, which has puzzles and dress-up time with favorite Barbie Dolls.

Plan your year's activities and get more than P5,000 worth of coupons with the limited-edition SM Mall of Asia 2008 Planner.

A collector's item featuring a Sanso painting for a cover, plus maps and photos of the mall by the Lomo group, the planner is the definitive guide to shopping and fun at the SM Mall of Asia this coming year.

The planner is available at the Concierge and selected tenants for P250.



SM PRIME Holdings president Hans Sy with Santa at the launch of the Bear for Charity project

THE GIFT OF GOLD

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Your loved ones deserve a golden Christmas.
Spread some holiday happiness with SMART
Gold's Trio Plans - 3 postpaid lines under 1 name,
with better handsets and a stronger network.

New applications are subject to a 24-month lock-in period. Credit guidelines apply.
 Download application forms at www.smart.com.ph/gold
 Bring the following documents: valid ID, proof of billing, financial documents (COE or W2).
 Subscribers can also avail via credit card applications together with a valid ID.

For details, call *888 through your SMART cellphone, 888-1111 via landline or visit any SMART Wireless Center.
 See flyers for details. Promo runs until December 31, 2007.
 Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4610. Series of 2007.

**SMART
Money**

THE GIFT OF GOODWILL

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Playing Santa is easier when you shop using your SMART Money card. Plus, with every transaction, you earn raffle points for the chance to visit Hong Kong Disneyland!

See flyers for more details or call the SMART Money hotline at 15177 on your SMART cellphone or visit www.smart.com.ph
Promo runs until January 31, 2008. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5656. Series of 2007.

SMART
THE POWER TO LEAD



LAS PIÑAS BC

Paskong Pinoy is celebrated

MANILA BROADCASTING COMPANY (MBC) and the Cultural Center of the Philippines showcased Filipino Christmas traditions in Paskong Pinoy.

Misa de Gallo is celebrated beginning Dec. 16, with various hermanas as sponsors, led by MBC and Star City on the first Mass.

On the first day of Simbang Gabi, about a thousand underprivileged children were fed and given gifts through Sopas, Sining at Sorbetes. Special entertainment was provided by the Ramon Obusan Dance Company, Payatas Choir and Ballet Manila.

On Dec. 18, CCP's Performing Arts Division reenacted the Panunuluyan, the search of Mary and Joseph for lodging in Bethlehem, from Baywalk and around the CCP Complex. Award-winning stage and film actor Yul Servo played Joseph.

A parade of floats looking like giant lanterns was also held. The floats were the entries of nine colleges and universities in the Ilaw ng Pasko competition.

The Far Eastern University's College of Fine Arts depicted Christianity and Filipino Christmas traditions through various generations.

The College of St. Benilde paid tribute to migrant Filipino workers while the University of the East College of Fine Arts created an interplay of Filipino icons.

The Polytechnic University of the Philippines' College of Engineering interpreted Christmas in sound, light, and motion. The Technological University of the Philippines

focused on the spirit of sharing and the Filipino's indomitable spirit in the face of adversity.

The De La Salle University's College of Engineering show how the spirit of Christmas was in every Filipino every day of the year.

The University of the Philippines' College of Architecture developed the concept of "iba't-ibang tinig, iisang himig" while National University and Manila Business College showcased Filipino Christmas traditions.

Sixteen children's choirs competed for the grand prize of P100,000 in Himig ng Pasko. Each choir sang three numbers within 15 minutes, including the required competition piece "Kumukuti-Kutitap."

Contestants included Batasan Hills Elementary School, Aurora Quezon Elementary School, Legarda Elementary School, St. Joseph Parish Las Piñas, Malate Catholic School, Vox Angeli of Santuario de San José Greenhills, Bagong Silangan Elementary School, Hiyas ng Maynila, Coro Angelitos of Isabelo de los Reyes Elementary School, Sacred Heart Academy of Pasig, Juan Luna Elementary School, Lourdes School of Mandaluyong, Infant Jesus Academy of Marikina, Barrio Obrero Elementary School, DSWD Children's Choir and Palanan Elementary School.

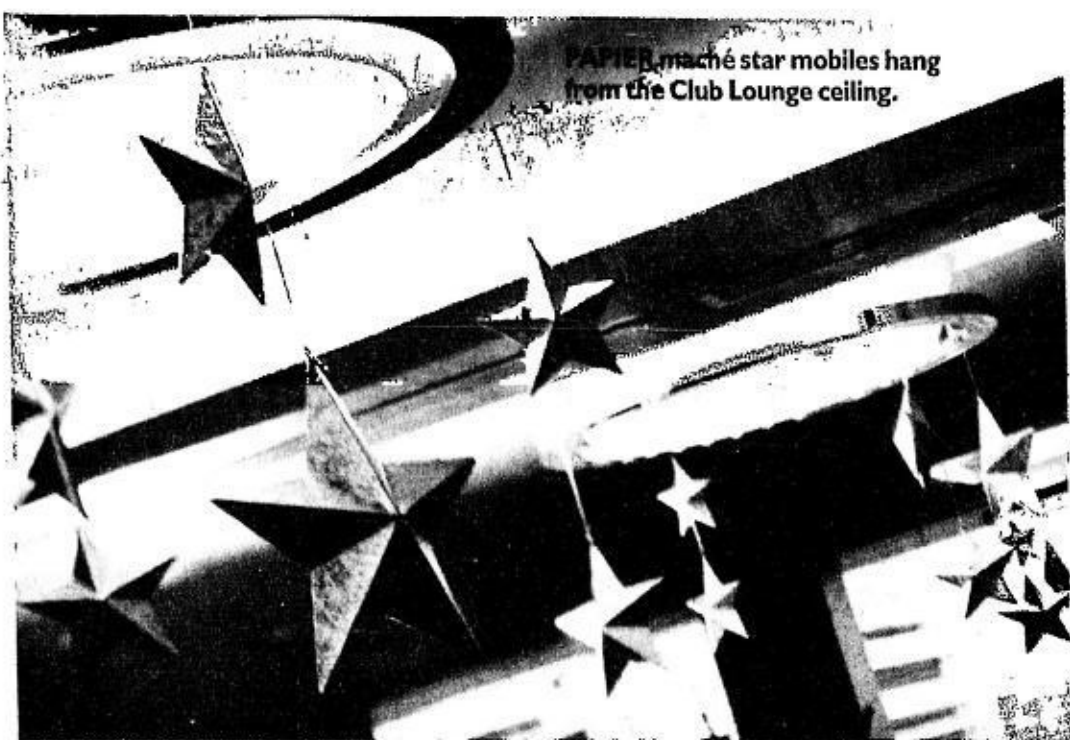
Top bands performed in Tunog ng Pasko. They included 6 Cycle Mind, Kamikaze, Parokya ni Edgar, Sponge Cola, Imago and Sandwich.



LEGARDA Elementary School



AURORA A. Quezon Elementary School



PAPIER maché star mobiles hang from the Club Lounge ceiling.

5-star hotel's Pinoy Christmas

INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA HAS A Filipino Christmas this year. Chosen to execute the theme is renowned Filipino floral architect and stylist Rachy Cuna, who gathered folk craft and natural materials from different parts of the country for the Christmas trees, wreaths and table arrangements.

The installations can be seen at the Intercon until Jan. 7.

Capiz shell discs and *parol* of shell, hemp and paper were hung on gold-painted bamboo. Wreaths of dried raffia were embellished with papier maché jeepneys and dolls in native costumes.

Every floor featured trees made of different materials like *anahaw* fans and *salakot*. A tree fashioned from balls made of hemp are trimmed with indigenous materials like palm fruits. Guest floor trees have bases of Muslim okir.

At the lobby is a bamboo hut festooned with papier maché miniature jeepneys, horses and dolls. It is filled with Christmas cakes, breads and cookies. Beside the hut is a gaily decorated cart where two women in Filipino dresses cook *bibingka* and *puto bumbong*.

A towering *belen* has been set up at the driveway with the images of the Holy Family made of gold-painted metal. The Child Jesus is cradled on a gold *papag*.

White capiz lanterns on bamboo poles or hung from palm trees light up the façade.

A concert of Philippine and international carols by the Pangkat Kawayan and De La Salle University Chamber Ensemble and Transchorale is presented everyday until Dec. 24, 6:30-7 p.m.

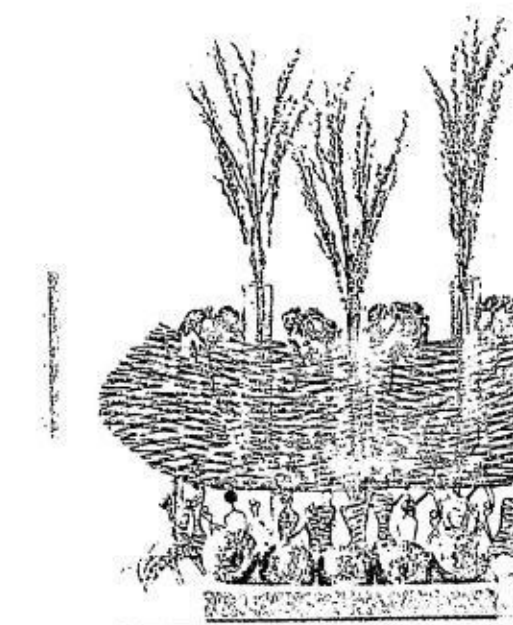
CHRISTMAS tree of salakot, hemp balls, capiz stars, anahaw fans and papier maché horses



A WREATH at the door of the grand ballroom



TABLE lamp accent piece of bamboo, raffia and buri palm



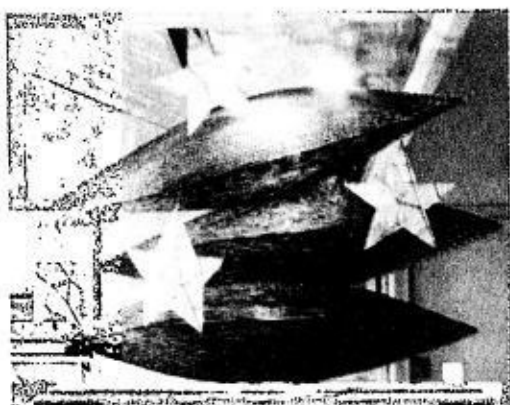
A TABLE arrangement in the Club Lounge conference room



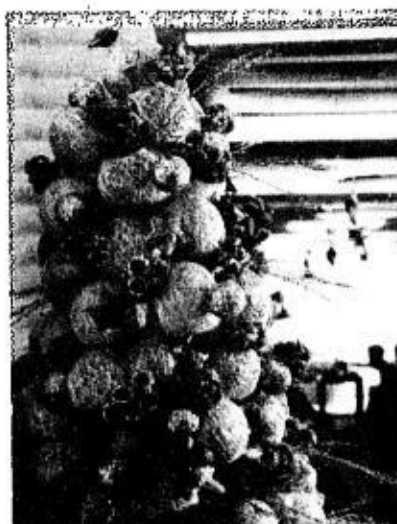
CANDLEHOLDER with palm fruit, pine cone and capiz shell



ABACA rosebuds and a blue anahaw star



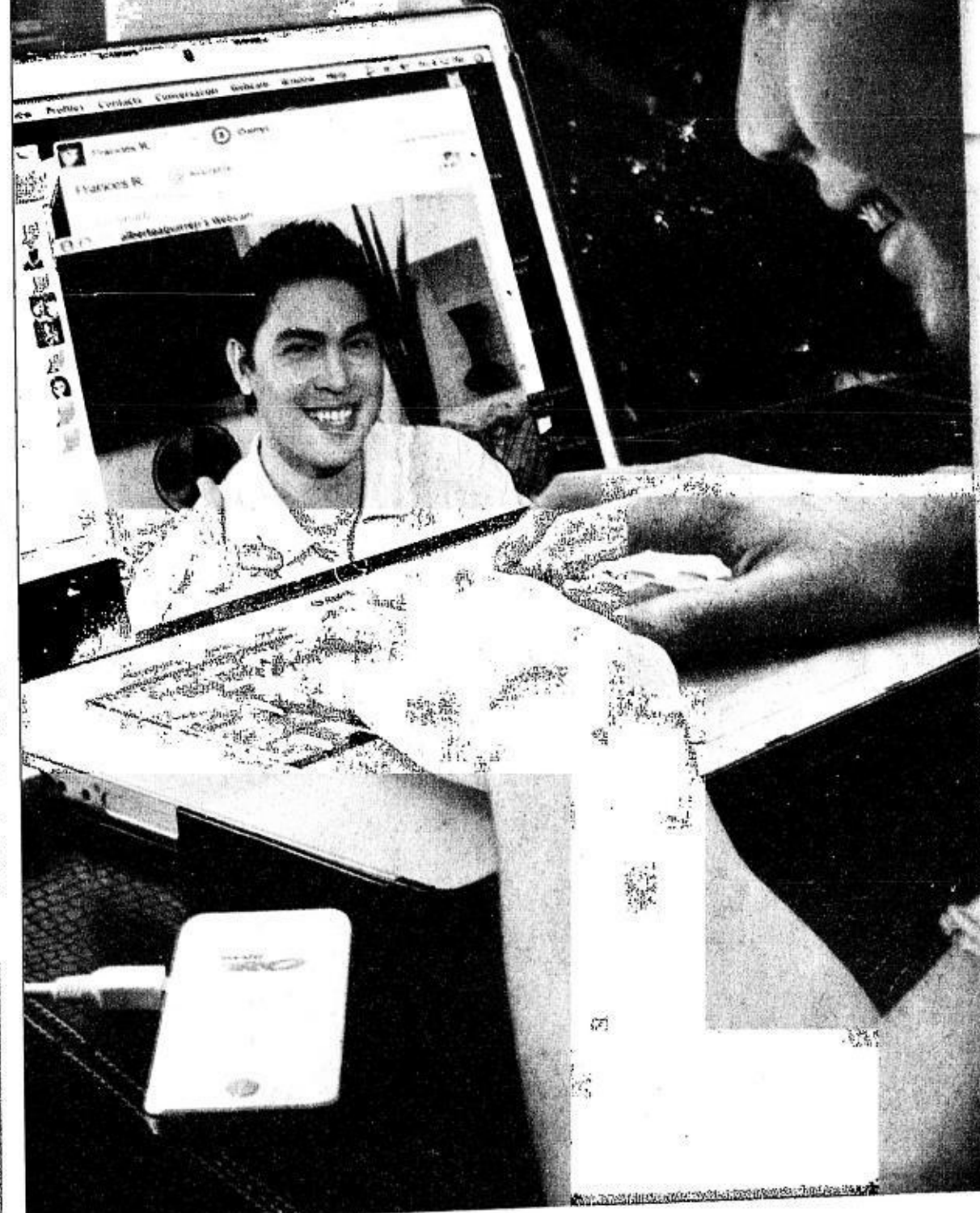
AN ACCENT piece at the Prince Albert Rotisserie's show kitchen



MANILA hemp balls make up this tree with blue papier maché flowers, stars and balls and twigs.

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THE GIFT OF TOGETHERNESS



Ngayong Pasko, magkakapiling pa rin kayong mga bro kahit walang landline.

Sa SMART Bro's nationwide coverage*, may broadband internet na 7x mas mabilis kaysa dial-up kaya naman tuloy-tuloy ang pag-chat, email at surf!

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**Merry Xmas!
Kita kitz
tayong lahat sa
Noche Buena!**

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**Makukumpleto ang buong pamilya sa Pasko
dahil sa ALL TEXT ng SMART Buddy!
For only P40, merong 180 SMART-to-SMART
at 20 texts to other networks.
Talagang meri-meri this Christmas!**

For more information, visit www.smart.com.ph or text SAGOT AGAD to 888
or access SAGOTAGAD via wap.smart.com.ph
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5676. Series of 2007.

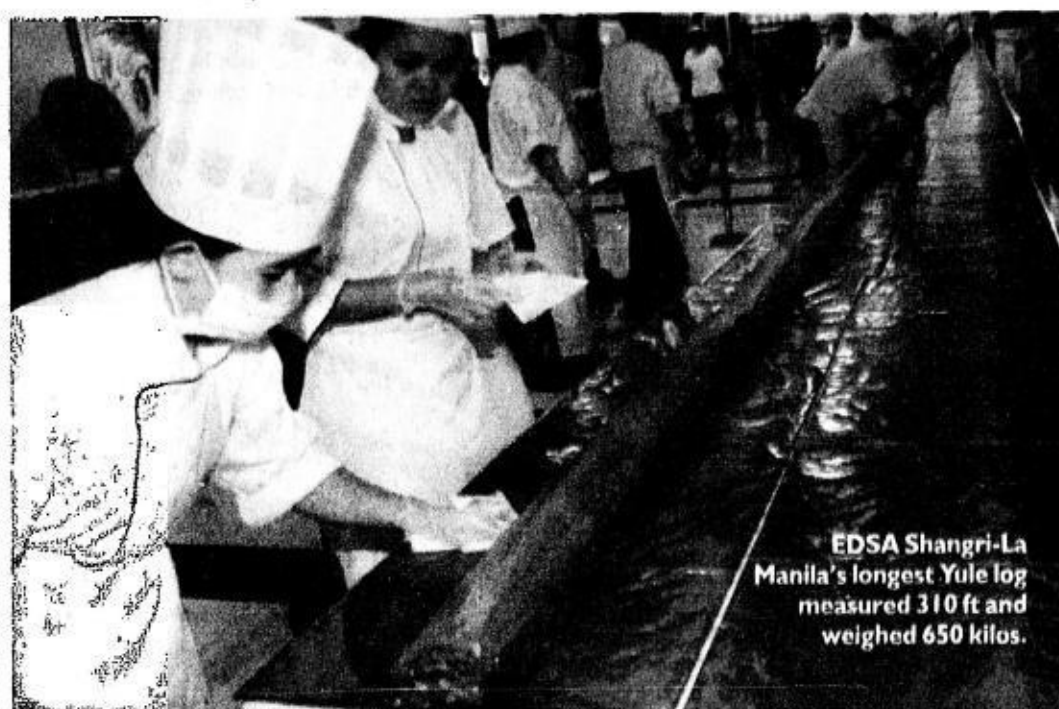
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

D4

LIFESTYLE

**TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 25, 2007**



EDSA Shangri-La
Manila's longest Yule log
measured 310 ft and
weighed 650 kilos.

The longest Yule log in Mandaluyong

IN KEEPING WITH THE FILIPINO practice of the longest Christmas season ever celebrated around the world, Edsa Shangri-La (ESL), Manila kicked off the holidays with the lighting of the giant Christmas tree at the Lobby Lounge and the unveiling of the longest Yule log in the city at the main lobby.

Tracing its origins from medieval Italy (*ceppo*) and France (*buche de noel*), the much-loved Yule Log was then an actual tree hauled into the household come Christmastime.

The master of the house would then pour mulled wine and oil over the trunk before it was lit up. The cinders were then saved, as these were believed to provide protection against evil. This tradition persisted in Quebec, Canada until the last quarter of the 19th century. But these days, this tradition is remembered by preparing a special pastry resembling a log.

Measuring 310 feet and weighing 650 kilos, ESL's Yule Log was the first of its kind to be prepared and presented in a grand manner in Mandaluyong.

Over 54.31 kg of chocolate topped the pastry, and the cream and raspberry fillings weighed 181 kg. Six chefs, led by executive sous chef Nicola Coccia and pastry sous chef Ariel Reyes, labored to create 26 logs every day for one week.

While the whole hotel is dotted with fabulously decorated Christmas trees, there are three trees in the lobby that still need a bit more sprucing up.

Guests are encouraged to bring more cheer to these trees by purchasing Christmas ornaments and hanging them up on the tree. Proceeds of the ornaments' sale go to Operation Damayan.

Established in 1988 by the late Betty Go-Belmonte to provide assistance to the vic-



BRIGHT lights on the 25-foot tree usher in Christmas at Edsa Shangri-La, Manila.
Lighting the tree are Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, Menchie Abalos, Katrina Ponce Enrile and Edsa Shangri-La general manager Christopher Chia with children from White Cross.

tims of the Mount Pinatubo eruption, Operation Damayan remains committed to its various humanitarian projects for the education and medical sectors.

The hotel features Christmas room packages and holiday events, including three New Year's Eve parties—Lobby Lounge Countdown; Drenched in Sound, the rave party by the poolside; and Bailamos, a ballroom-dancing party in Isla Ballroom.

Call 6369092; fax 6319933; or e-mail malou.rosal@shangri-la.com.

European Christmases showcased

MALLGOERS GOT THE CHANCE TO witness Christmas celebrations in different European countries as the Delegation of the European Commission in the Philippines and The Podium presented the Amazing EU Christmas at the mall's Lounge Area.

The centerpiece of the promotion was an exhibit of Christmas trees decorated by representatives of the European Union's member states. They included the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Belgium and Austria.

In Finland, said to be the real home of Santa Claus, the Christmas tree is set up on Christmas Eve. It is decorated with apples and other fruits, candies, paper flags, cotton and tinsel. Instead of Christmas lights, it is lit up with candles.

Belgium has two Santa Claus figures—St. Nicholas and Pere Noel. St. Nicholas visits those who speak the Walloon language, while Pere Noel visits the French-speaking.

In France, children leave their shoes by the fireplace so Pere Noel can fill them with gifts. The shoes are packed with goodies in the morning. Sweets, nuts and small toys hang from the tree.

St. Nicholas, called Svaty Mikalas in the Czech Republic, is believed to climb to earth from heaven on a golden rope with his companions—an angel and a whip-carrying devil. Czechs eat soup made of cod roe and regale each other with tales of a mythical golden pig.

In Germany, beautiful gingerbread houses and cookies are symbols of Christmas. Trees are decorated with Christbaungebak, a white sour dough that can be molded in shapes and baked for tree decoration.

Some homes in Germany have several Christmas trees.

The Nativity set can be found in many

homes in Spain during the Christmas season. Tiny oil lamps are lit in every house on Christmas Eve.

After the midnight Mass and Christmas dinner, the streets fill with dancers, usually doing the special Christmas dance *jota*. Merry makers revel to the sound of guitars and castanets, and sing words and music handed down for hundreds of years.

In Italy, the Christmas season goes on for three weeks starting eight days before Christmas when they have the *Novena*. During this period, children go from house to house singing and reciting Christmas poems.

A strict fast is observed 24 hours before Christmas Eve, followed by a celebratory meal featuring a light Milanese cake called the *panetonne*.

Christmas begins with the Sta. Lucia ceremony in Sweden. Before dawn on Dec. 13, the youngest daughter in a family puts on a white robe with a red sash. She wears a crown of evergreen leaves with tall lighted candles attached to it. She wakes up her parents and serves them coffee and Lucia hats.

Other kids join her—the boys are dressed as Star Boys with long white shirts and pointed hats.

In the Netherlands, Sinterklaas Avoed or St. Nicholas Eve is eagerly awaited on Dec. 5. Sinterklaas Avoed or Santa Claus is known for his generosity and kindness.

Portuguese children await the coming of the Three Wise Men on Jan. 5. They place their shoes in windowsills and doorways, filling these with carrots and straw in the hope of drawing in the Wise Men's camels and finding their shoes packed with gifts and treats.

During The Podium event, storytelling sessions were conducted by representatives of local embassies. Choirs sang Christmas carols in different European languages.

Para magkapiling pa rin kayo ng mga mahal niyo, pumili mula sa widest range of international services:

IDD calls

Para marinig ang pamilyar nilang boses, tawagan sila!

Dial: +(country code)(area code)(phone no.)

International SMS

Padalhan sila ng personalized Christmas greetings!

Text: +(country code)(area code)(cellphone no.)

International MMS

I-share sa kanila ang mga holiday moments niyo!

Send picture and SMS to: +(country code)(mobile code)(cellphone no.)

To activate your MMS:

Text GPRS ON and MMS ON to 333

To request for GPRS settings:

Text SET GPRS <phone model> to 211.

Ex: SET GPRS N6680

International 3G Video Calls

Mas masaya ang kwentuhan kapag face-to-face!

Dial: +(country code)(mobile code)(cellphone no.)

Choose "video call" in calling options.

Reminder: The person you're calling should have a 3G-phone at should be within a 3G area.

International Voice Text

Padalhan sila ng mga Christmas messages na pwede nilang i-retrieve anytime! (P10/voice text*)

1. To send: Dial *8900(country code)(area code)(cellphone no.)
Ex: Dial *8900966509244444

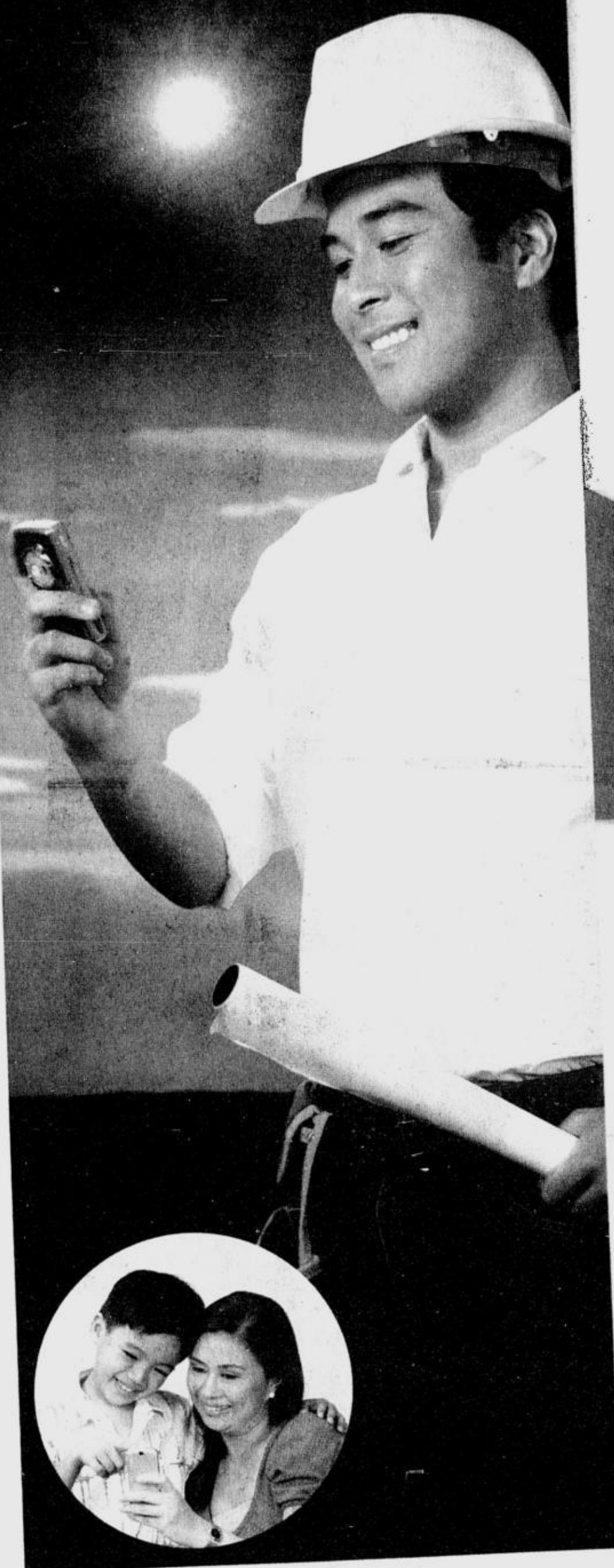
2. To retrieve: Call the retrieval code included in the SMS alert or dial: *9900(country code)(area code)(cellphone no.)
Ex: Dial *8900966509244444

3. To reply: Press "1" upon message retrieval then follow voice prompts.

*Up to January 19, 2008

SMART INTERNATIONAL SERVICES
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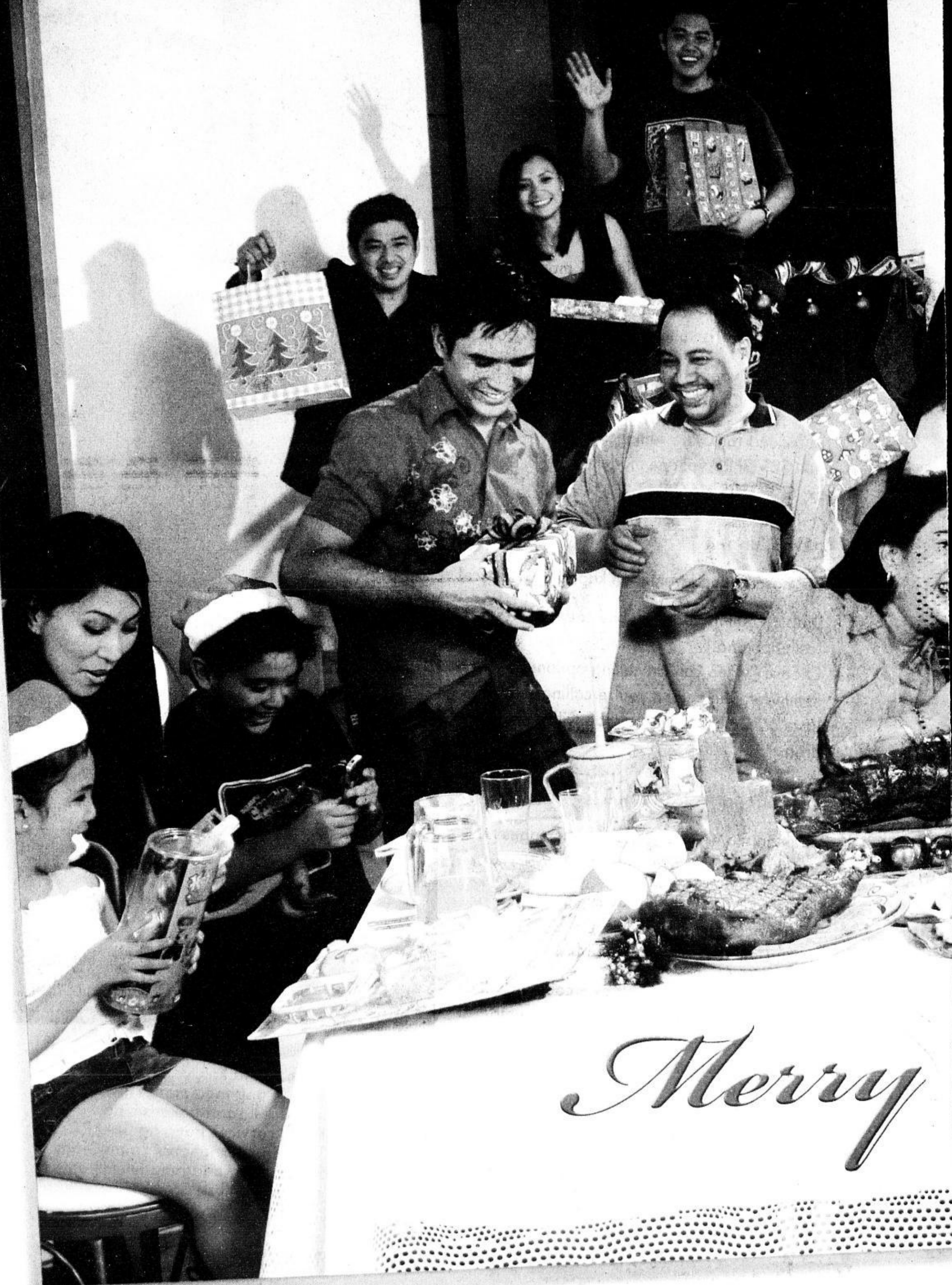
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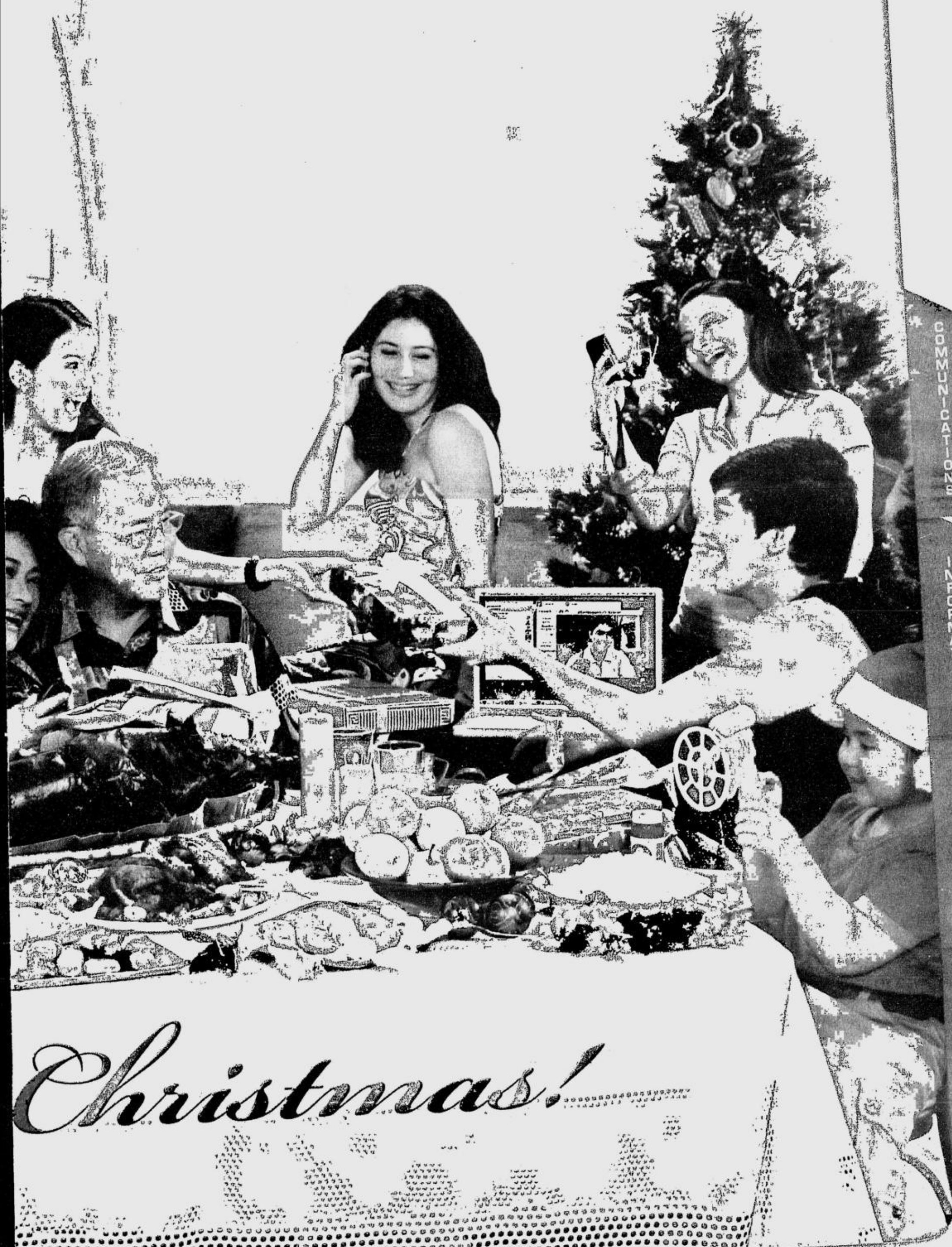
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NGAYONG PASKO, ISAN PAGSASALO-SALO ANG G



Merry

IG NAPA KASAYANG
GIFT NAMIN SA INYO.



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Christmas!

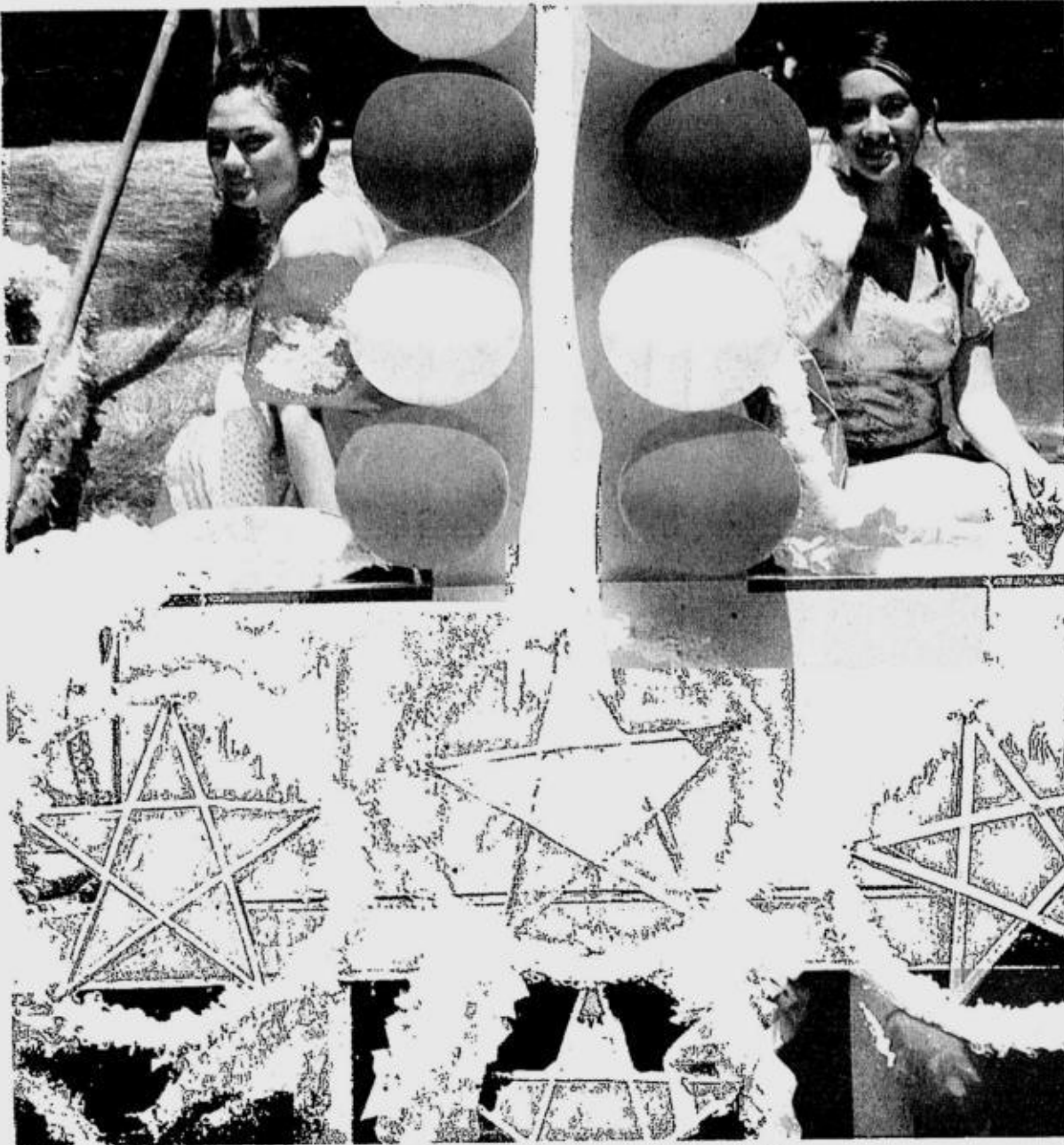
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Philippine Christmas lanterns shine in Sydney

THE PAROL, BRILLIANT hallmark of the Filipino Christmas, shone brightly on the streets of Sydney during the major Australian city's recent Christmas parade. The Department of Tourism (DOT) organized the country's participation, which included a colorful float, performances by the Bayanihan Philippine National Folkdance Company, a festive kiosk at the park and a special raffle.

"The Philippines is known to have one of the liveliest and longest Christmas celebrations in the world. By showcasing our flair for festivities in this event, we encourage Australian travelers to come to our islands and experience the yearlong merriment and warmth of our people," said Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano.

Modeled after the famous Macy's Thanksgiving parade in New York, the first-ever Sydney Christmas Parade drew over 150,000 spectators that crammed the sidewalks and lined the windows of high-rise buildings. The pageant wound along a 1.9-km route that started at Wynward Street and ended at Santa's Village in Tumbalong



AUSTRALIAN media said the Philippine float added more color to the Christmas parade.

Park, Darling Harbour, for a post-parade feast. Here, a booth was set up with souvenirs and information materials about the Philippines. Tourism Undersecretary Ed-

uardo Jarque Jr. and DOT Team Asia Pacific's marketing head Rica Bueno led the Philippine delegation. Philippine Airlines hosted the group's transportation

requirements.

Colorful float

Parol designs of various colors decked the float, which also featured local instruments,

tropical floral accents and pictures of various beach destinations. The 23-strong contingent from the world-famous Bayanihan Philippine National Folkdance Company followed the mobile display. They regaled viewers with a series of dances and musical numbers, giving a glimpse of the various sights and sounds of Philippine history, art and culture.

The Philippines was among the 65 floats and street performances from other countries that participated in the celebration.

The Bayanihan dancers and musicians were given a special segment at the parade's culminating festivities at Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour. Here, the group delighted the audience further with three sets of performances.

"Our booth at the party in Tumbalong Park was crowded with Sydneysiders who wanted to take home more information about the islands. Moreover, members of Australia's top press outfits were keen on featuring our destinations in their programs and publications," reported DOT tourism attaché for Australia and New Zealand Consuelo Jones.

Jones said the Daily Telegraph's report took note of the Philippine float as helping inject more color and atmosphere into the pageant.

"This was a great opportunity for us to share the good things about our country. All the excitement they witnessed in one day moved them to find out more about our holiday at-

tractions," said Jarque.

New Australian strategy

To help sustain Australian interest in the Philippines, the department formally launched on the same day the So Much, So Near online raffle. A lucky website visitor and his guest stand to win a luxury holiday to the Philippines, which includes airfare and accommodations at the five-star Sofitel Philippine Plaza in Manila.

"A lot of Australian tourists rely on the Internet when planning their vacation. This urges them to take the next step and see first-hand what our islands have to offer," Bueno explained.

Durano said the DOT's participation in the parade was part of the new strategy to promote the Philippines as a destination that offers "so much, so near" to the Australian tourist.

"The new marketing salvo highlights the accessibility of our country's countless and varied adventures to Australia's travel market," Durano said. "The takeaway we'd like to impress on this group is that there are a lot of unique holiday experiences awaiting them nearby."

The So Much, So Near promotional run takes into account rising Australian visits to the Philippines. Australia is the country's seventh largest source of visitor arrivals. A total of 76,048 Australian tourists came to the Philippines between January and September 2007. This figure reflects a 9.7-percent growth over the same period last year.

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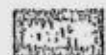
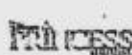
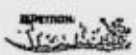
SHOW SCHEDULE

January 18 (Friday)	2-shows	(2PM / 6PM)
January 19 (Saturday)	3-shows	(1PM / 4:30PM / 8PM)
January 20 (Sunday)	2-shows	(2PM / 6PM)
January 21 (Monday)	DAY OFF	
January 22 (Tuesday)	1-show	(6 PM)
January 23 (Wednesday)	1-show	(6 PM)
January 24 (Thursday)	1-show	(6 PM)
January 25 (Friday)	2-shows	(2PM / 6PM)
January 26 (Saturday)	3-shows	(1PM / 4:30PM / 8PM)
January 27 (Sunday)	3-shows	(1PM / 4:30PM / 8PM)

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White Christmas

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES CAN experience white Christmas at Eastwood City Friday-Sunday until Dec. 31, 6-7 p.m. and 8-9 p.m.

Snow falls at Eastwood City as the Christmas Village at Citywalk 2 becomes a true winter wonderland.

Visitors can watch white bubbles fall from the second-floor balcony and imagine Santa's reindeer are really running down the icy path.

They will probably feel the coldness of the backdrop of the Nativity scene but will be kept warm by watching it with friends and family.

Then they can have their photographs taken to remember their white Christmas. Shoppers and diners can enjoy the scene at Eastwood City, 6876770-74, text 0917-8EWCTY.



KIDS play with snow at Christmas Village.

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

What is the emergency management in case of ingestion of the powder used in firecrackers?

Take Charge Doc!

Powder used in firecrackers or any hazardous chemicals that are swallowed may harm the digestive tract, or cause widespread damage if they enter the bloodstream and are transported to other parts of the body. Symptoms such as vomiting, which sometimes may be bloodstained, impaired consciousness, pain or burning sensation may be noted. Our primary goal is to maintain airway, breathing and circulation, and to call for help immediately. Suggested first aid measures while waiting for medical help to arrive or prior to bringing the victim to the nearest hospital might include dilution with water or milk, administration of syrup ipecac or activated charcoal, or the use of other common household products as improvised emergency antidotes. If corrosive substances burn the victim's lips, give him frequent sips of cold water or milk. Although do not apply such measures without the benefits of expert advice. Appropriate first aid measures vary depending on the type of poison. Induced vomiting may do more harm than good, because the poison may harm the digestive tract or esophagus. Vomits may also block the airway. However, induced vomiting may be necessary with some poisons to save the victim's life. If the victim becomes unconscious, open the airway and check for breathing. Be prepared to give mouth to mouth resuscitation and chest compressions if necessary. Use a face shield for mouth to mouth resuscitation if there are any chemicals on the victim's mouth.



This week's answer to our feature question is courtesy of Dr. Anna Liza Eleccion, Dr. Eleccion, a medicine graduate of Lyceum Northwestern FRQMF, finished her residency training in OB Gynecology at the same institution. Dr. Eleccion is happily married to Dr. Gerry Eleccion and is blessed with two kids. She spends her free time reading and shopping at the malls. MEDICard members may avail for her consultations at Nazareth General Hospital in Dagupan from Monday to Saturday 10am to 3pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphib.com for your inquiries on health matters.



MEDICard PHILIPPINES INC. Trunkline: 88-1-8888 Fax No: Text Website: www.medicardphib.com

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

NAGING IWAS LALO SI ARVIN KAY CHER SA LOOB NG UPISINA...

SIR, YOU WANT SOME COFFEE?

NO... NO!

BA'T MAS-YADO KANG SERIOUS SA TRABAHO? TATANDA KA AGAD.

BABY FACE AKO, CHER?

KAHAPON, PA-SYMPATHY SIYA! ME PROBLEMA DAW! SABI KO, MAG-FILE NG LEAVE OF ABSENCE!

I WAG MONG MAS-YADUHAN! HA HA HAA!

NIPPED IN THE BUD! BAKA MAGALIT KA KASI, MISIS?

MISIS?! WOW, SARAP PAKINGGAN!

GALIT NA GALIT NA ANG AMA NI JENNY...

'BAGAL! MEPEL! KAILAN PA MASIGILO NI CHER SI ARVIN?

MATEO, I WAG KANG MAINIP! MAY NA-ISIP AKONG IPAGAWA KAY CHER, BUKAS! TAPOS NA ANG PAG-IWAS NI ARVIN!

TO BE CONTINUED

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

Maligayang PASKO!

PUGAD BABOY

BY RM. JUNIOR

PERO... SA VEGAS PO E MALAKING NEGOSYO ANG SUGAL...

MALAKING NEGOSYO KUNG IKAW ANG NAGPA-PASUGAL.

ANG YUMAYAMAN D'YAN E ANG PAGCOR, SI STANLEY HO, SI ATONG ANG, SI BONG PINEDA, SI RAMON REVILLA, SI DON KING...

AT SAAN NILA KINUKUKHA YUNG KITA NILA?

KILA ERAP, DENNIS RODMAN, MRS. CABALFIN AT SA MGA KAGAWA KONG MINGANG UMASA SA BIGLANG YAMAN.

E DI TIGILAN N'YO NA PO ANG PAGiging CHEF AT MAGTAYO NA LANG TAYO NG SAKLAAN.

AARKILA AKO NG PATAY!

BA'T AARKILA KA PA?

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

OH, JON... A CHARM BRACELET! HOW DARLING!

SEE? THERE'S A LITTLE CAT CHARM AND A LITTLE DOG CHARM...

WHERE'S YOURS?

THAT'S THE ROSE

THEY WERE FRESH OUT OF PORK CHARMS

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

HI KEESHA, IT'S

ZOE, GUESS WHAT WE

GOT FOR CHRISTMAS? A TRAMPOLINE!

C'MON! MY TURN!

ATOMO AND WEBBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

Eek! You Don't Look So Great.

I STUFFED MYSELF LAST NIGHT. SO TODAY'S GOING TO BE A DAY OF INDIGESTION.

BUT IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY! WE SHOULD DO CHRISTMAS STUFF.

I'LL BURP YOU A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

NINONG...

OMPONG!!!

MERRY CHRISTMAS PO???

INAAK... NAGSE-SECOND CHILDHOOD KA BA???

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

OYNGA PAKIKY!

HABA! GREETINGS! HABA! ME REGALO KO S'ENYO! HAHAA...

OH, HAHAA! KA NA SA KUNG-ANANGING KONG-KONGHABAN ULI TO.

DO TSONG, I'M FAP FOR YOU.

OH-WOW! SPECIAL ANG REGALO KO SA INYO. MULA PA TO SA KAIBUTURAN NG MALAMBING AT MAPAGPALAYA KONG PUSONG CUTE. I GIVE YOU... MY GIFT OF FORGIVENESS...

WALA NAMAN AKONG ATRASO SA'YO AH.

DO! KINUKWESTYON MO REGALO KO, ABANO. HOW DARE YOU! HOW DARE YOU!!

WY BUT... I HAVE FORGIVEN YOU.

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

STOP! DON'T COME IN!

I'M WRAPPING YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT--HOLD ON JUST A SEC...

I'M ALMOST DONE.

THERE!

I DIDN'T WANT TO SPOIL THE SURPRISE!

DAILY CROSSWORD

12/25/07

By Willy A. Wiseman
New York, NY

ACROSS

1 Use acid for art

5 Composer Berg

10 Corned-beef dish

14 Bug off!

15 Finnish bath

16 Norway's capital

17 Mallard's cousin

18 "Marner"

19 Goneril's father

20 1941 Charles Boyer film

23 "My Friend _"

24 Period

25 Allstate rival

28 CDs' ancestors

31 Violinist Mischa

35 Singer Boz

37 Polloi precursor

39 Refrain syllables

40 Type of insurance

43 Actress Lanchester

44 "Citizen Kane" studio

45 Racial

46 Mob melegs

48 190

50 Itsy-bitsy

51 Play about Capote

53 Like Keats' poetry

55 Following Dr. Hahmann's medical system

63 At any time

64 Icy rain

65 Libertine

66 Educator Horace

67 Chris of tennis

68 Graphic image: abbr.

69 Bonus

70 19th-century Chief Justice

71 Comly

DOWN

1 Bk. before Job

2 Van Gogh's brother

3 Anthracite, e.g.

4 Circular flights?

5 State of India

6 Non-cleric

7 Weightiness

8 Med. school course

9 Anti-Puritan satirist

10 Not miss a trick?

11 Cruising

12 Cabbage salad

13 Car signal

21 Son of Odin

22 Afore

25 "My Name Is _" Lev

26 Pathogenic bacteria

27 "Jerusalem Delivered" poet

29 Flower of Texas

30 _-disant (so-called)

32 Bangor's state

33 Laxative from aloe

34 City in NE France

36 Orch. section

38 Verb-forming suffix

41 Dog-breeder's org.

42 Top room

47 Sell-out letters

49 Stick

52 Surprise victory

54 Simple tune

55 Coarse fiber

56 Elliptical

57 List of options

58 Edison's middle name

59 Adult-to-be

60 Tender cut

61 Feast on Oahu

62 Safecracker

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're bold about going after what you want. (And there are definitely things you want, because you have high ambitions to achieve in this lifetime!) Many of you are attracted to the arts and music. You have a marvelous imagination. You always reach as far as you can possibly grasp. Your year ahead will primarily focus on partnerships and close friendships.

Birthdate of: Annie Lennox, singer/songwriter; Carlos Castaneda, author; Sissy Spacek, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You can be extremely productive at work today. You have the patience to wade through detailed and routine stuff that might normally bore you. Get as much done as you can.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a fine day to make travel plans or anything related to publishing, the media or going back to school. Serious discussions about politics or religion likely will take place.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's fortunate you have the patience to deal with lots of red-tape stuff today. Wrap up loose details related to insurance matters, wills, estates, inheritances, bills and taxes.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Take the time to sit down with partners and close friends to make practical, long-range plans about the future. Someone older than you might have some wise advice. (It doesn't hurt to listen.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is an excellent day to get better organized at work. Your critical faculties are sharp. You quickly see what needs to be repaired or revived. Your frame of mind is practical but cautious.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Teachers, parents and other professionals or caregivers who work with children can give sensible advice to children or make practical long-range plans about children. (Common sense isn't so common.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Tackle practical jobs at home today, especially those related to repairs. Family discussions will seek out solutions to practical problems, especially in the long-range future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're very orderly today. You want to organize everything around you. Make lists and decide what you should tackle first.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): If shopping today, you'll want to buy something that's practical and that lasts a long time. You will not waste your money. Furthermore, you'll work hard for your money today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a day for serious thinking. You want to keep busy and you want to deal with practical matters, whatever you do will be done carefully and thoroughly.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Careful, painstaking research will pay off today. You want results, and you're willing to work for them. You have lots of patience for details.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might be reserved when dealing with people today. Someone older or more experienced than you might give you advice. Take it!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

By Dave Green

Conceptis Sudoku

Difficulty Level ★★

12/25

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4 2 7 1 5 3 8 6 9

5 8 9 6 7 4 3 1 2

3 1 6 2 9 8 5 4 7

7 6 5 4 3 2 9 8 1

2 4 3 8 1 9 7 5 6

1 9 8 5 6 7 2 3 4

8 7 4 3 2 1 6 9 5

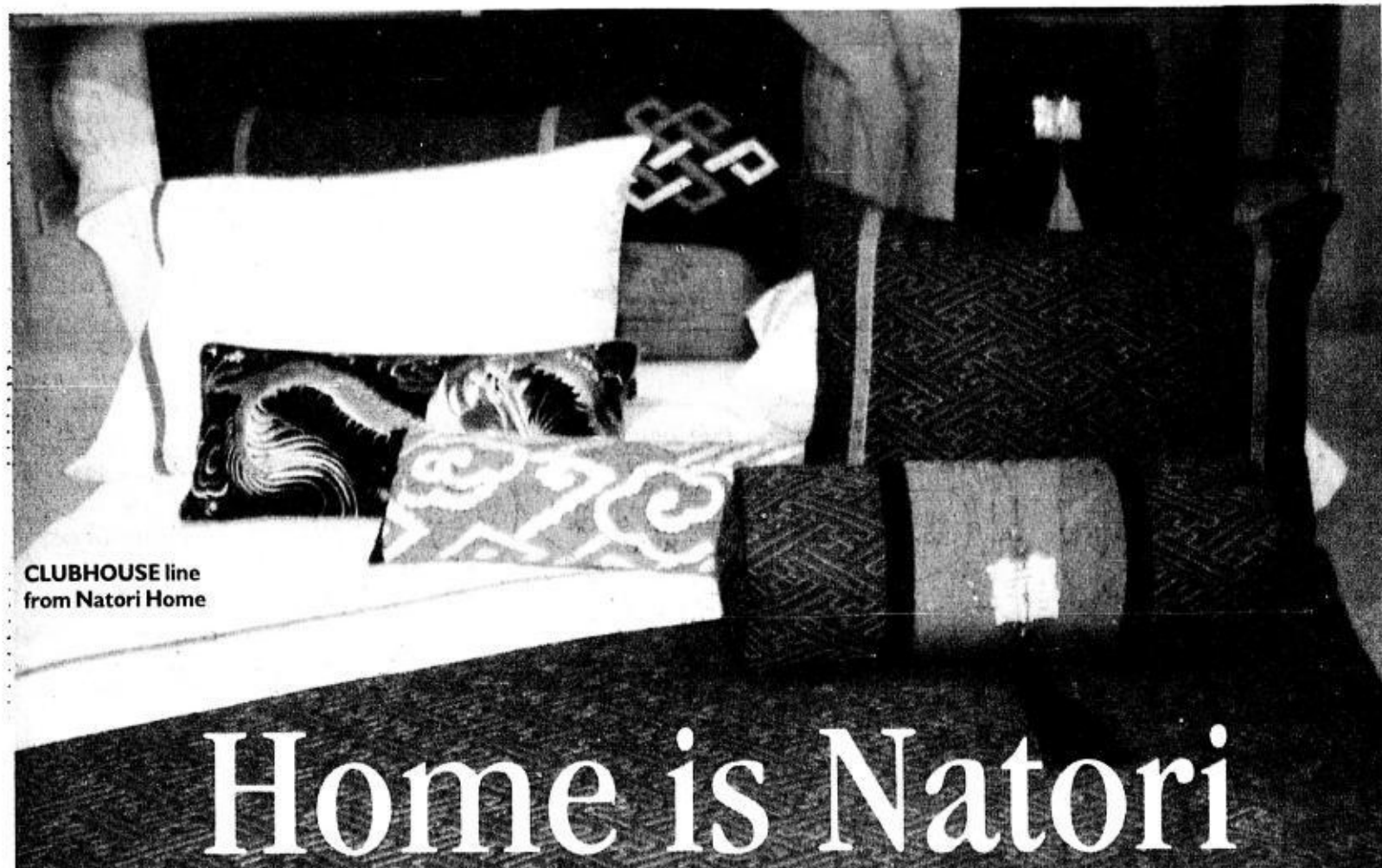
6 3 2 9 4 5 1 7 8

9 5 1 7 8 6 4 2 3

Difficulty Level ★

12/24

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CLUBHOUSE line
from Natori Home

Home is Natori



TALISMAN line

ON FEB. 29, 2008, THE Asia Society Philippine Foundation and the Asian Cultural Council Philippines will honor Josie and Ken Natori with a gala dinner and benefit show at Makati Shangri-La.

Proceeds from the benefit will support Asia Society's educational programs and the Asian Cultural Council's grant programs.

Philippine-born Josie Cruz Natori was an investment banker who first wandered into the fashion industry through a lingerie collection that celebrated the then revolutionary combination of femininity and modernity.

Often imitated but never duplicated, Natori's style has been characterized by exquisite Asian craftsmanship detailing, embroidery, vibrant colors, and appliqué work.

RAJ
collection

NatoriBamboo is a soft jacquard fabric that is naturally antibacterial. All fabrics are machine-washable.

After three decades in the global business of style, the name Natori has become

Natori has explored and championed other creative endeavors, such as a ready-to-wear line for women, men and children and, most recently, a collection for the home.

Natori Home is a collection of home textiles where the highest form of art comes to life in a balance and harmony that is the essence of Natori.

Featuring innovative trademarked fabrics such as NatoriCotton, NatoriSilk, and NatoriBamboo, each collection of linens was designed for aesthetics, comfort and practicality.



NATORI'S bedding beauties include spreads, quilts and coverlets.



JOSIE Natori

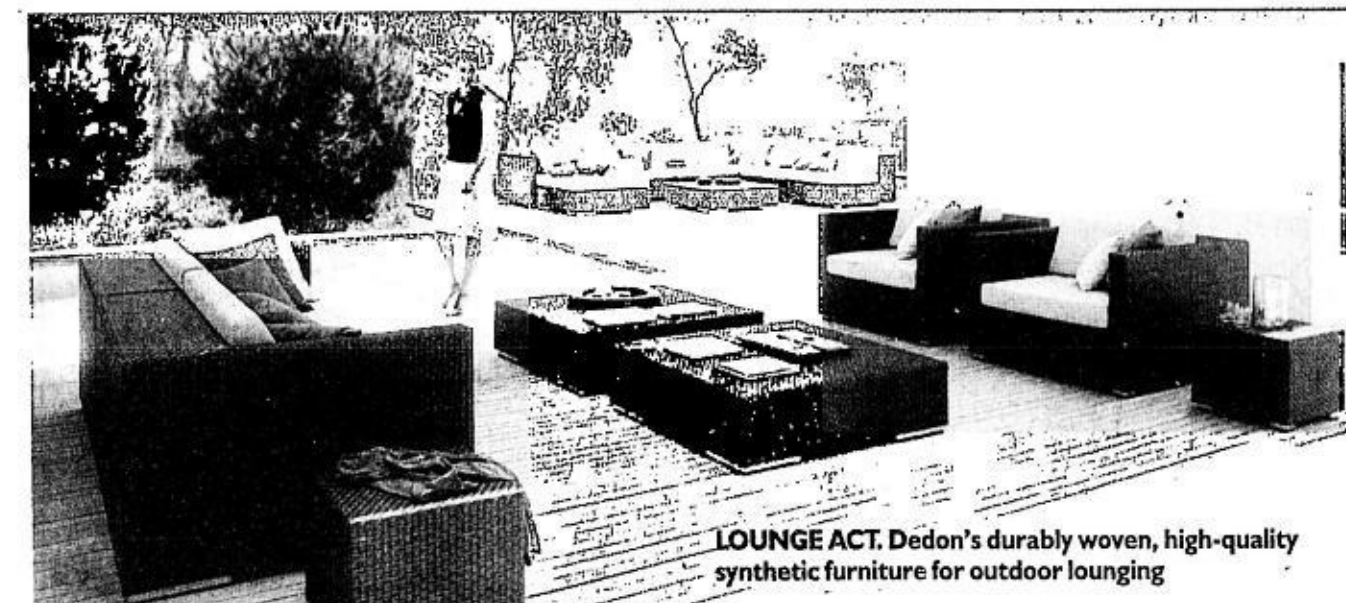
synonymous with a distinctly modern and luxurious brand of East-meets-West design.

Natori's relationship with the Asia Society began 15 years ago but it was only in the past eight years that she has been "dedicated to the Asian Cultural Council, whose sole mission is to raise funds to give grants to artists in Asia and the United States that revolve around Asian culture."

She added, "My mission with Asian Cultural Council is to raise awareness and funds for furthering the cause of artists from the Philippines."

Though Natori claims she is not "neatly divided," the strength and clarity of her vision is perhaps the key to her enduring success. "I love my work, but success in fashion is not enough," Natori said. "I want to be able to give something back, to make a difference in people's lives."

Call 8108983, 7524374, or visit www.natori.com.

LOUNGE ACT. Dedon's durably woven, high-quality
synthetic furniture for outdoor lounging

Outdoor living room

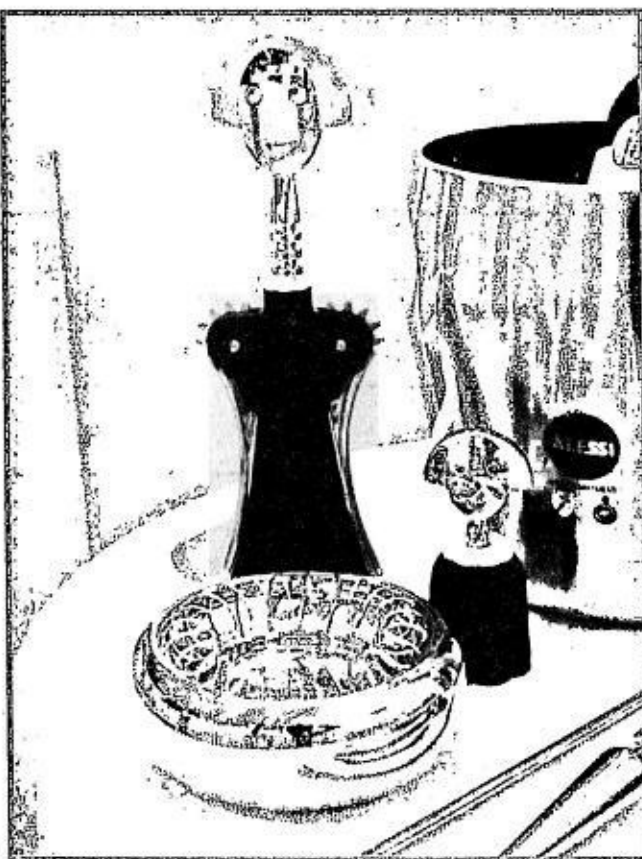
A REMARKABLE ASIAN TRADITION LIES behind Dedon's success story. It was in 1990 when its founder and master artisan, Bobby Dekeyser, discovered how the centuries-old traditional art of weaving in Cebu can turn his "outdoor living room" dream into a reality.

Dekeyser combined Germany's ultra-modern technology of producing the Dedon Fibre (formerly the "Hularo") with the indomitable experience of Cebu craftsmen. The result: durably woven, high-quality synthetic furniture.

What began as a vision turned into a flourishing reality of outdoor living rooms, thanks to the company's international designers' breakthrough in design and innovation as exemplified by its unique collections.

Dedon is exclusively distributed by Living Innovations Corp. Visit the Dedon showroom at 2/F, Makati Shangri-La Hotel's Retail Arcade along Ayala Avenue (tels. 8302230, 8122649). Visit www.livinginnovations.ph.

Luxe gifts for the family



ALESSI, ITALY'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS luxury home accessories brand, shares some Christmas gift ideas for the family.

For Dad, pick the perfect present—Achille Castiglioni Spiral Ash Tray or Anna G. Chrome Corkscrew, both distinctively designed for ease and functionality.

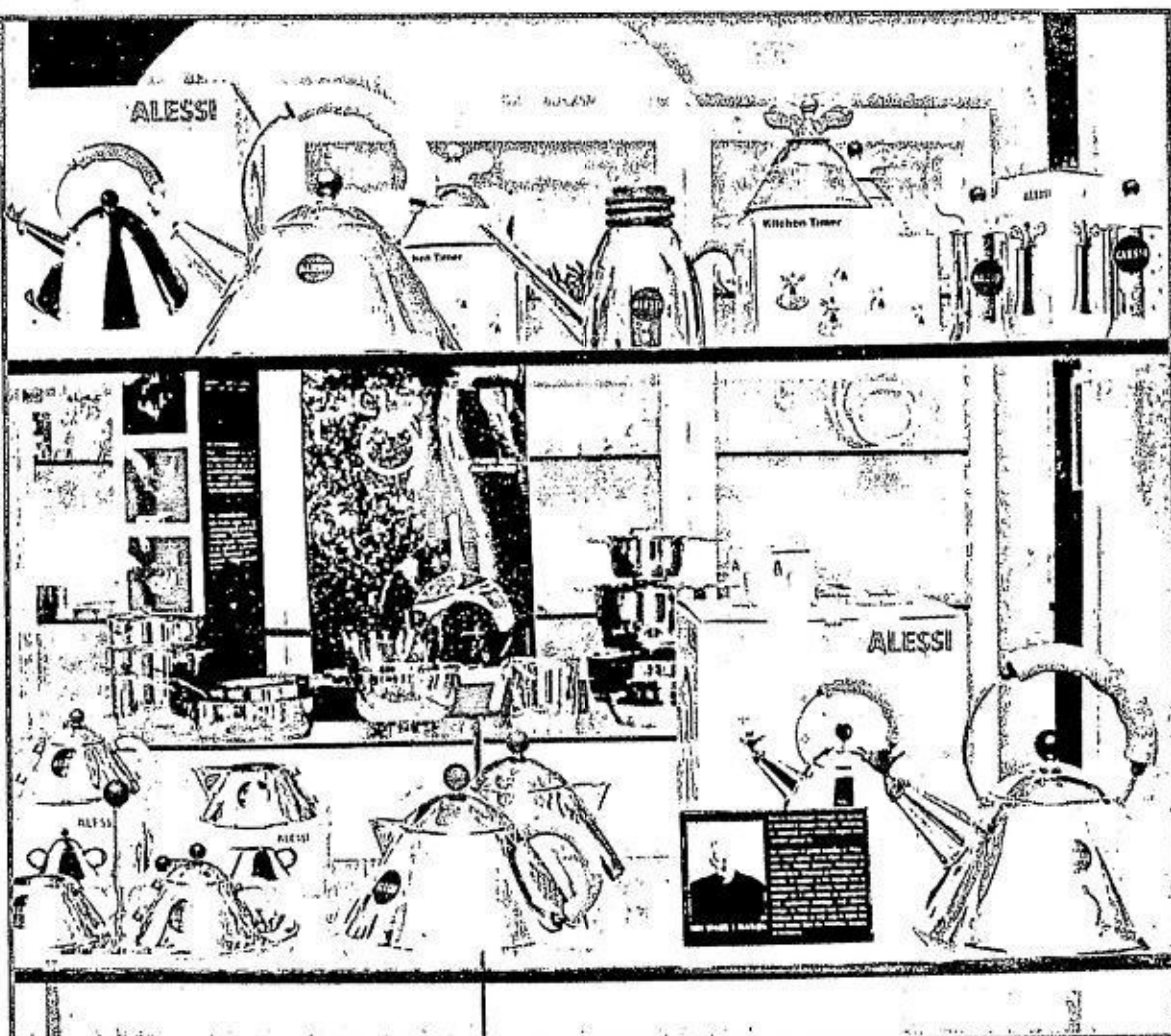
For Mom, get the ultimate in refined kitchen elegance with Michael Graves Whistling Kettle, Alessi's best-selling item.

Make your sister giggle with happiness over the Tigris Cat Bowl, which has removable dual inserts for easy cleaning. Now, her pet is well taken care of.

Treat your brother to a Cocktail Shaker by Luigi Massoni e Carlo Mazzeri, so that his next bonding session rocks.

This holiday season, take your pick from Alessi's three product lines: A di Alessi, Alessi (the main collection) and Officina Alessi (the most experimental and limited-edition pieces). Fill your home with exclusive kitchenware, tableware and home accessories.

Visit Rustan's Makati or the Alessi flagship store at Building B-5 unit 110-111 Fort Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. Call 8564452.



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FIREWORKS

THE BLOOMFIELDS



B&O's state-of-the-art TV and sound system



BANG & Olufsen's flagship store in Greenbelt 5, the first of its kind in the Philippines



FOR PEOPLE with a distinct taste for high-end audio and video products, B&O promises to satisfy their desires with its unique designs, superior craftsmanship and functional innovations.

An earful of Denmark in Manila

By Alex Y. Vergara

WITH THE RECENT opening of the flagship store in Greenbelt 5 of the Danish high-end audio and video products manufacturer, Bang & Olufsen's (B&O), local techies and home-entertainment enthusiasts with an eye for form as well as function now have a new and accessible venue to go.

Thanks to the Manila presence, B&O's Filipino fans need not go to Singapore and Hong Kong to get their hands on the brand's latest as well as classic lines. Nor do they have to subject themselves to the hassles of personally importing certain units they fancy.

Patrons are also now assured of getting immediate after-sales support, as the brand, through its local representative, has also opened a service center in Manila. A separate, but equally well-trained group can make suggestions and even visit clients' homes to help them make the most out of their home-entertainment systems.

Interestingly, the company has been around since 1925 and is carried by more than 650 stores worldwide, 40 of which are located in the Asia-Pacific region. Its main factory is still based in Struer, Denmark, while its regional office is located in Singapore.

"It was a matter of timing," said Roger Jonsson's, B&O's retail and development manager for the Southeast Asian market. "We wanted to make sure if the market was ready for our products. It was also a question of where we were ready to launch in the Philippines."

"The Philippine economy may not be as big as that of Malaysia or Thailand, but a considerable number of wealthy and well-traveled Filipinos are familiar with the brand. This, perhaps, explains B&O's move to go for a newly opened and upscale venue such as Greenbelt 5 in Makati over an older, more established mall with a mass-based clientele."

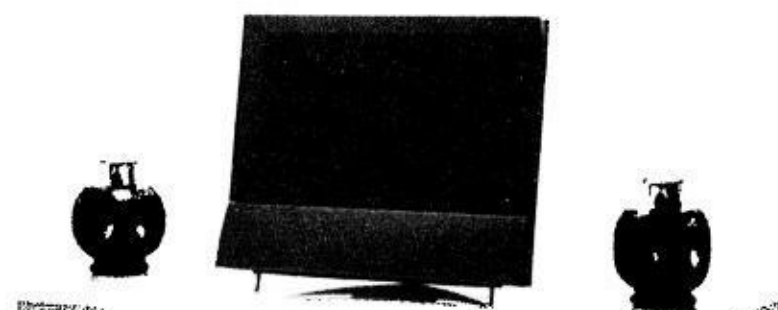
'Equally important'

"Our Manila store is equally important as our other stores abroad," said Jonsson. "The only items it doesn't carry are cordless phones [pending government approval]. We want our customers to walk around and experience B&O. The concept and the look for a store of this size are basically the same worldwide."



MARIO Katigbak with guests at the B&O flagship store launch

High-end audio and home-entertainment brand Bang & Olufsen makes its presence felt—and heard



BANG & Olufsen flat-screen TV with plasma display technology and LCD version

In keeping with the brand's heritage, its attention to detail extends to B&O's decision to choose the best local partner there is. After giving it considerable thought, Jonsson believed that they've found the right one in Store Specialists, Inc.

"SSI has a long and impressive history of dealing with luxury brands," said Jonsson. "Being the major luxury retailer in Manila, nobody knows retail better than it does. It has a highly competent staff and a strong commitment to make the part-

nership work."

Apart from pushing products, part of the commitment includes making customers happy and satisfied long after they've purchased a unit. Thus, SSI also manages B&O's service center as a separate company.

Despite its limited size (60 sq m), B&O's Greenbelt store manages to look sleek, compact and uncluttered just like the products it houses. One of its unique features is a centrally located revolving showcase that features three different video setups.

"Because of the range of products and options we have, it's absolutely impossible for us to feature all of them at the same time," Jonsson said. "The idea behind this turning scene is to show customers various possibilities and combinations of products available to them."

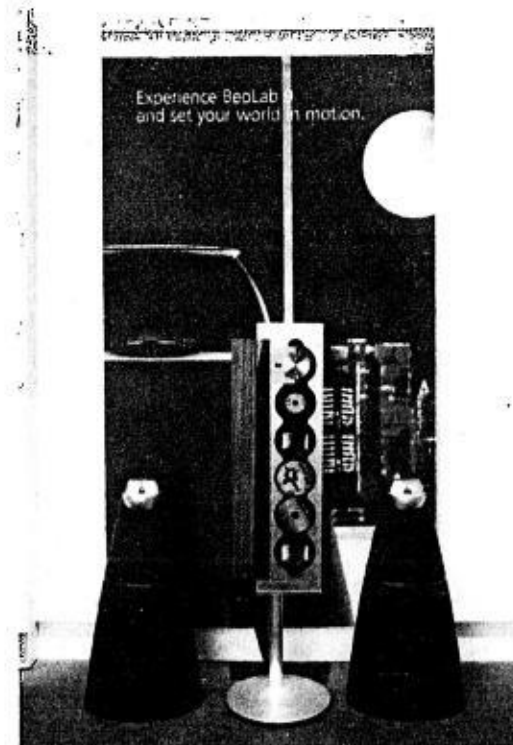
Showcase

Such a movable showcase will also enable the staff to easily change the displays to keep customers interested and give them something to look forward to. Just like in an actual den or entertainment area, the showroom is equipped with a pair of leather chairs for customers to sit on and savor the sights and sound coming from B&O's latest technological innovations.

So-called music stations and other audio equipment are featured in the store's peripheral areas. Although B&O's main thrust is to produce sleek, almost sculptural pieces of home-entertainment systems (including high-definition plasma TVs), most of its products are compatible with nearly all sorts of digital gadgets, including the ubiquitous iPod.

"Our music station enables customers to experience for themselves what their own iPods and mp3 players can do," said Jonsson. "It can connect with these gadgets and allow them to listen to music either through our speakers or headsets."

Since B&O, in Jonsson's words, "specializes in giving a nice sound quality," perhaps even the most tone-deaf customers would be surprised to find out what their iPods could do. Of course, it doesn't hurt that the Danish brand's designs are also works of art in themselves.



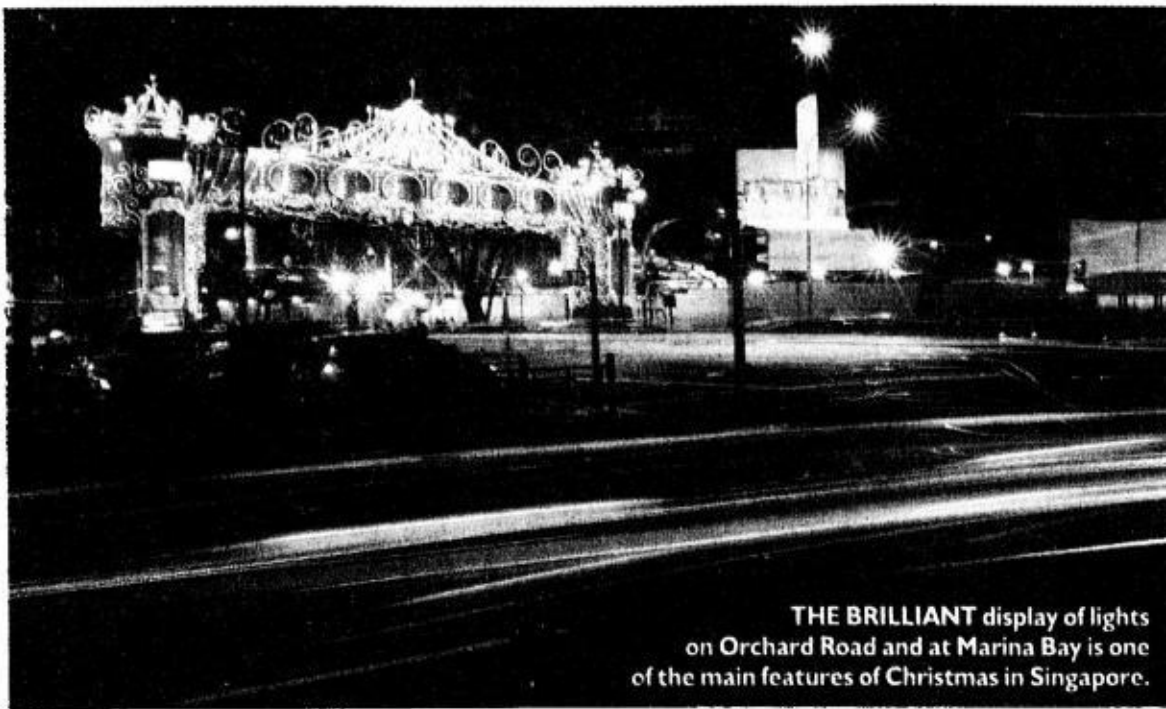
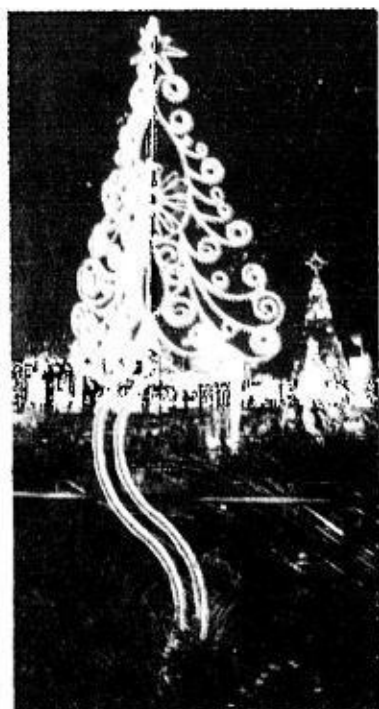
SAY GOODBYE TO SILENT NIGHTS.

HAVE A ROCKIN' NEW YEAR WITH THE BLOOMFIELDS ON DECEMBER 29 AND HEADBANG TO THE BEATS OF BAMBOO ON DECEMBER 30, 2007. TROOP TO THE TRUMPETS PLAYSHOP MUSICAL 'CHRISTMAS IN THE KEY OF J' AT 7:00PM ON DECEMBER 23, 25, 26, 28 THIS YEAR AND JANUARY 1, 2008. ROAR THROUGH THE KART TRAK AND MARVE AT THE BOOMING FIREWORKS DISPLAY.

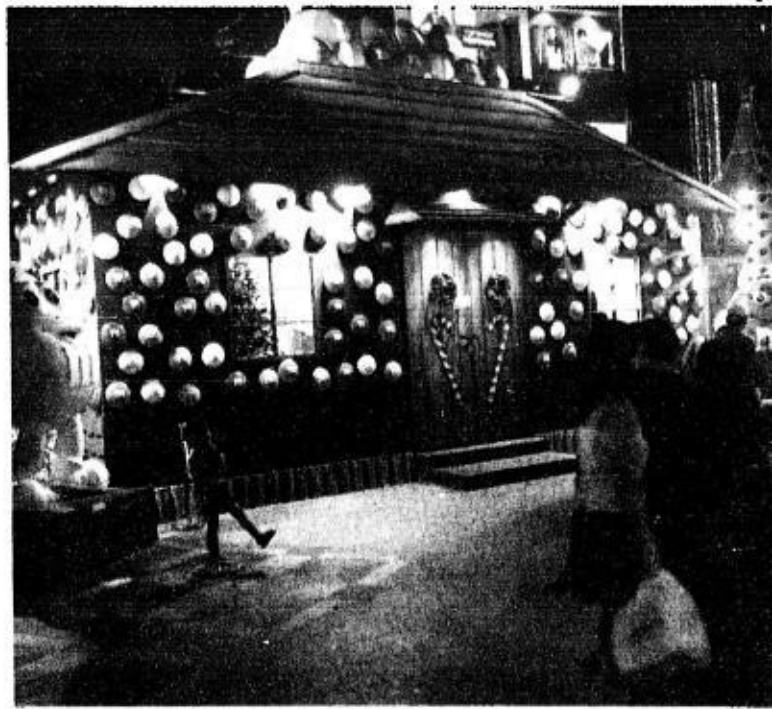
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IAAPA A member since 1993



THE BRILLIANT display of lights on Orchard Road and at Marina Bay is one of the main features of Christmas in Singapore.



Merry tropical Christmas

Photos by Chito Vecina

SINGAPORE CELEBRATES the holiday season with a myriad of festive activities, dubbed "Christmas in the Tropics."

To get its tourists into the spirit of Christmas, Singapore hosts dazzling events including stage performances, entertainment events, shopping specials, concerts and dance parties, as well as the popular brilliant display of lights at Orchard Road and Marina Bay.

"Christmas in the Tropics is one of the key tourism drivers for Singapore, being a season that our overseas visitors look forward to," said Joycelyn Ng, Singapore Tourism Board's deputy director of leisure marketing and events management. "With a program packed with lots of shopping, dining and entertainment options, it's little wonder that one in five visitors surveyed last year planned their trips to coincide with Singapore's Christmas celebration. We hope that this year will be no different as we create for visitors their most memorable Christmas experience yet."

A key favorite of the annual Christmas in the Tropics celebration is the Christmas Light-Up, themed "A Fairytale Christmas." The stretch of Scotts Road and Orchard Road—from Tanglin Road to Plaza Singapura, and the Marina Bay area from Hotel Rendezvous to Raffles Avenue, is transformed into a bewitching Crystal Forest decked with magnificent chandeliers, magic harps, glittering jewels, dazzling lights in red, gold and white, and even a magical carousel.

This fantasy land is the setting for the unfolding of a fairytale inspired by the Nutcracker Suite, which tells the story of handsome Prince Noel who goes in search of his missing true love, Princess Ballerina, through the Crystal Forest.

Another must-see holiday extravaganza was the Celebrate Christmas in Singapore event, with the theme "Christmas—It's all About Love." Visitors watched holiday performances



ALL is bright in Singapore during the holiday season, and clearly the cost of power is not a problem.

nightly at various locations along Orchard Road, as well as a colorful parade of floats every night until Christmas eve.

There was also an interactive Nativity Village at Plaza Singapura. The festivities culminated in a Grand Christmas concert on Dec. 24. Other entertainment highlights during Christmas in the Tropics included performances, such as "Scrooge—The

Musical," "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," "Swan Lake" and "A Crazy Christmas"; the popular ZoukOut outdoor dance festival on Sentosa; Jewel Christmas Musical Light Show and "Snow" show at Mount Faber's Jewel Box; Classical Greece at the Louvre showcasing priceless pieces from the famed Louvre Museum in Paris, displayed for the first time outside the National Museum of Singapore, as well as numerous parties across the island to ring in the New Year.

More Yule shows

Suntec City Mall, one of Asia's most prominent shopping centers, is also marking the season with a big bang.

Themed "Shine This Christmas," the Fountain of Wealth, the world's largest fountain, was dressed up for the first time since its inauguration in hordes of light, adding much brilliance to the popular shopping district.

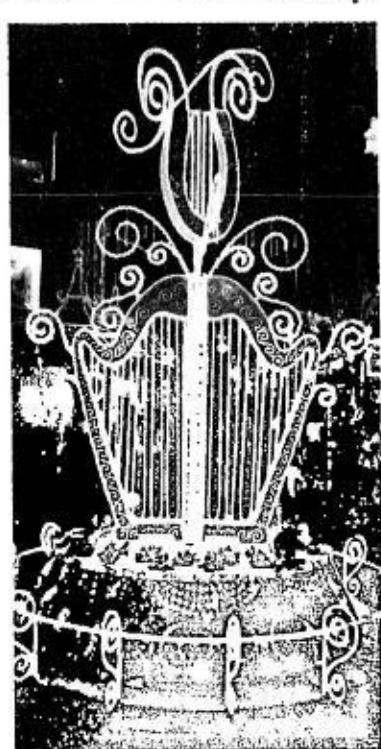
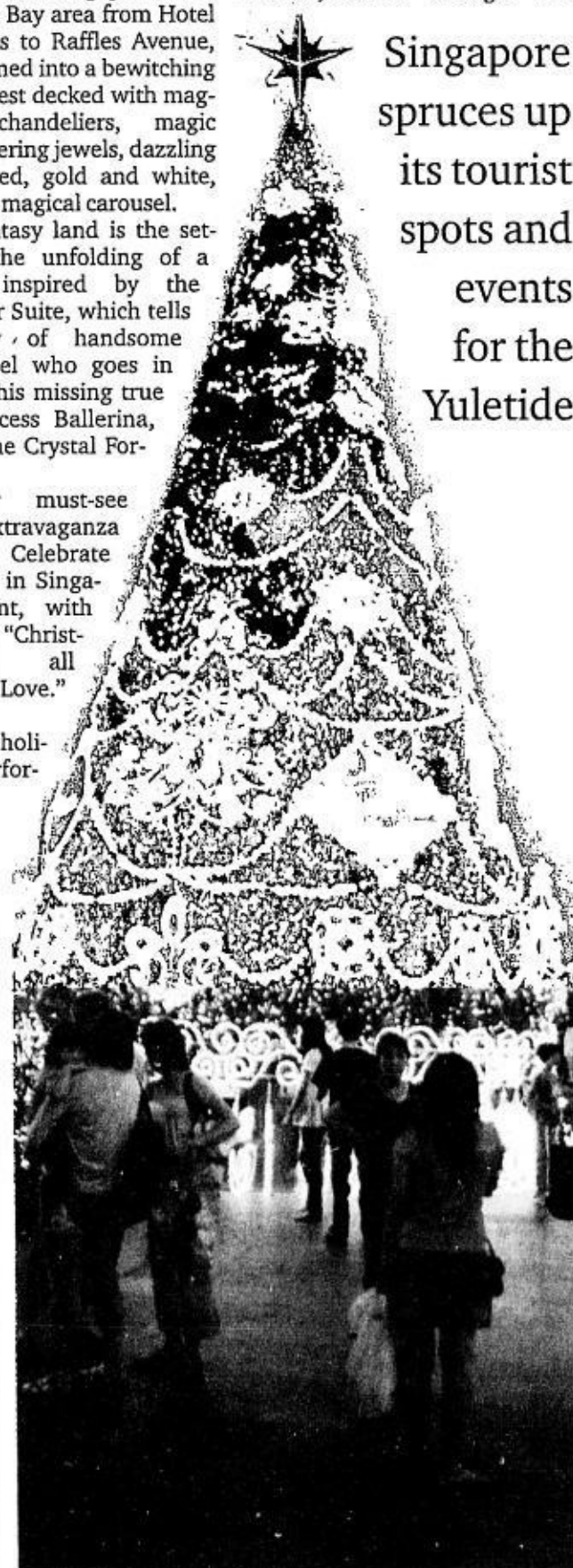
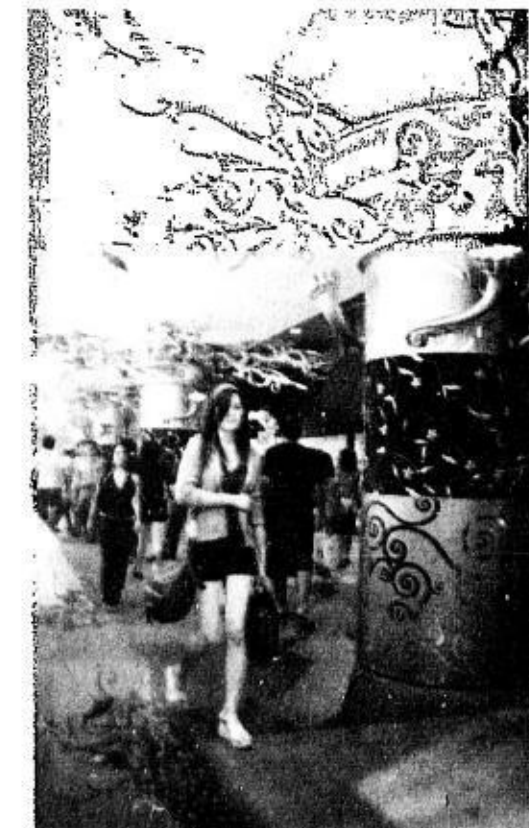
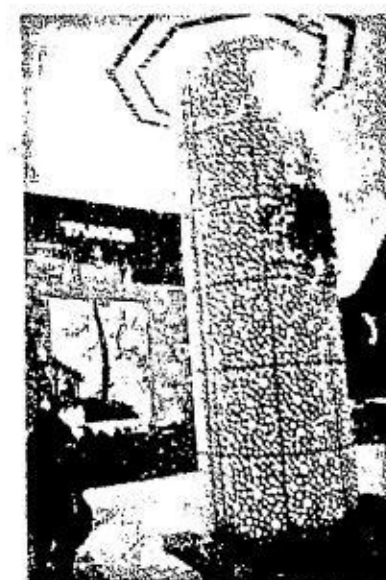
Besides Santa, the Looney Tunes gang—Tweety, Bugs and Sylvester—came to town in a sleigh full of gifts as they sang and danced to "Shine This Christmas' Looney Tunes Musical." And if you can't get enough of the gang, the Fountain of Wealth also gleamed in radiance from a festive Looney Tunes laser spectacular.

Over at the United Square Shopping Mall, Dora the Ex-

plorer performs in a brand-new live musical show. Children can look forward to an engaging play-along adventure with Dora and her friends. There is a meet-and-greet session after each show for the first 30 shoppers who spend a minimum of S\$30 in a single receipt.

Meanwhile, visitors of VivoCity can marvel at the magnificent 101-foot-tall Christmas tree that will hold pride of place at its rooftop Sky Park. Decorated with 600 baubles and featuring beautifully sculpted topicals in the middle, this tree is one of the tallest Christmas trees in Singapore.

For more on Singapore's holiday programs, log on to www.stb.com.sg



ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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Christmas wish for RP movies

"MY CHRISTMAS WISH FOR THE LOCAL movie industry is that it becomes an industry again ... That it will be accorded the proper respect and dignity it deserves, not only by the audience, but by the government as well."

Jose Javier Reyes, filmmaker

Christmas Hologram Tumblers

Promo runs until December 31, 2007.
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4161, Series of 2007

'Kubrador' off to New York

By Marinel R. Cruz

ALL IS SET FOR THE SCREENING OF JEFFREY JETURIAN'S "Kubrador (The Bet Collector)" in (MoMA) in New York City, according to producer Joji Alonso of MLR Films.

"Kubrador," the story of a woman forced to supplement the family income by working as a *jueteng* collector, opens the week-long Global Lens 2008 series on Jan. 10.

Year-long tour

The Global Lens 2008 series is the "touring component" of The Global Film Initiative, a US-based organization specializing in the acquisition, distribution and support of independent films from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, according to its website www.globalfilm.org.

"Kubrador" will be one of the 10 featured narratives that will also embark on a year-long tour of over 30 cities across the United States next year.

Welcome party

An invitational welcome party for the cast, sponsored by the Philippine Consulate General in New York will be held on Jan. 9 at the Kalayaan Hall of the Philippine Center on Fifth Avenue in New York, according to an e-mail sent to Alonso by Vice Consul Elena Maningat.

Lead actress Gina Pareño will have a meet-and-greet with the New York-based Filipino entertainment press on the same date.

"Kubrador" will be screened at the MoMA's 400-seater theater, with tickets at \$8 for general viewing.

"Our participation in the events for 'Kubrador' is two-fold—the reception on the

9th and the premiere on the 10th," said Maningat. "This will be our first cultural event for 2008. We look forward to its success."

On Jan. 14, Jeturian will "discuss his technique and his work in relation to Filipino cinema," according to the 35-page MoMA newsletter.

"The director's brilliant shots of the narrow, crowded streets become part of the psychological portrait of a once-proud woman reduced to working as a petty criminal," the MoMA newsletter reported.

'Luminous performance'

"Anchoring the film is a luminous, emphatic performance by veteran actress Pareño, who makes vivid not only the daily struggle faced by the Filipino underclass, but also the humor, wit and charisma her character applies to her unstable profession," the newsletter said.

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2007



(INQUIRER Entertainment is running this MMFF guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema tour. The MMFF runs from Dec. 25, 2007 to Jan. 7, 2008.)

Anak ng Kumander

Stars Manny Pacquiao, Ara Mina, Valerie Concepcion, Lara Morena, Roi Vinzon, Efren Reyes Jr., Perla Bautista, Dante Rivero, Alvin Anson, Long Mejia, Conrad Poe, Roldan Aquino, Rogelio Pacquiao

Directed by Jose "Kaka" Balagtas

Boxer Pacquiao is Ediel, son of a rebel leader of indeterminate ideology. He continues the armed struggle to avenge the murder of his father (Rivero). YouTube critics are harsh, ranting that this flick is a cross between "Rambo" and the Thai film "Ong-Bak." Also, Manny's "masamang damo" quip and Ara's line about being a "namumukad-kad na bulaklak" rival Mark Lapid's "puso ng saging" quote in a different action dud ("Apoy sa Dibdib ng Samar").

Top US acts Manila-bound

AT LEAST THREE TOP ACTS FROM THE US are reportedly in negotiations for major concerts in the Philippines.

On January 25, the Philippine Rock My Chemical Romance is set to perform at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City. This is a done deal, according to INQUIRER Entertainment sources in Viva Entertainment and MTV Philippines concert promoters.

In February, possibly for Valentine week, sentimental favorite Kenny Loggins may be back in

the country. Two years ago, Loggins reunited with Jim Messina for a US tour that was widely declared as successful, and which resulted in a new CD and DVD release, "Loggins and Messina: Sittin' In Again."

This year, Loggins joined start-up label 180 Music to release a new album, "How About Now." Also this year, he was inducted into Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard RockWalk.

For March, according to another source, the prospective visitors are pop rock hit makers Maroon 5 and alternative rock band Incubus. In Rolling Stone's Best 50 Albums of 2007, Maroon 5's "It Won't Be Soon Before Long" album is in the 32nd slot.

The iffy project, for which no single promoter is being specified and no concert date is being suggested as yet, is a concert by international concert stage icon Madonna. "It's certainly going to cost a great deal," said the source, "but it's a dream event, and some people are working hard to make it come true."

On her last global tour in 2006, Madonna delivered on her pledge to "turn the world into one big dance floor."



SANTA SEAL. A sea lion in a Santa cap plays with a tiny Christmas tree at Tokyo's Shinagawa Aquarium.

CHEER FACTOR

Quotable quotes this week

"I was in complete and total shock and so was he."—Jamie Lynn Spears, 16, on learning that she's pregnant and the father is boyfriend Casey Aldridge.

"I have to knock on wood because any minute now the wicked witch will come and ruin it all with a poisoned apple."—Katherine Heigl, on her fairy tale life.



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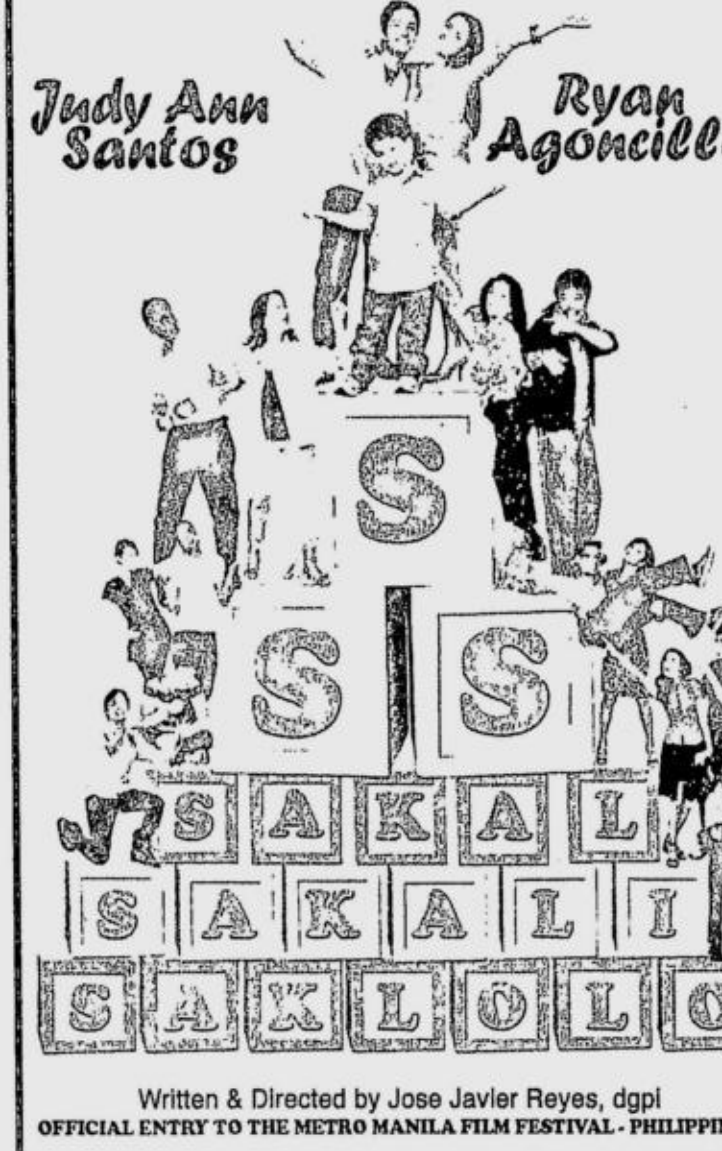
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ENTERTAINMENT

Amy Winehouse

LONDON—TROUBLED SINGER AMY WINEHOUSE course to have the year's biggest-selling album, challenge from former "X Factor" winner Leona Lewis, industry body said on Friday.

Winehouse, 24, who was arrested and bailed this of an investigation into perverting the course of justice 1.65 million copies of "Back to Black" which contains hits such as "Rehab", "Me & U", "Know I'm No Good" and "Tears Dry Up on My Own."

SPIN
"She has been the biggest British music for much of this spokesman for the BPI, former Phonographic Industry, which figures with the Official UK Charts Company.

Winehouse, nominated for six Grammy awards, with drugs and alcohol since shooting to fame. Her husband Blake Fielder-Civil is being held on course of grievous bodily harm and conspiracy to cause of justice.

The top 10 albums for 2007 in the UK this week: 1 "Back to Black" (Amy Winehouse); 2 "Spirit" (Leona Lewis); 3 "Cartoon Motion" (Mika); 4 "Beautiful World" (The Fray); 5 "Favourite Worst Nightmare" (Arctic Monkeys); 6 "Angry Mob" (Kaiser Chiefs); 7 "Back Home" (Westlife); 8 "Open" (Snow Patrol); 9 "Long Road Out Of Eden" (The Roots); 10 "Loose" (Nelly Furtado)

The Eagles' new album
The Eagles' first full studio album in 28 years, "Long Road Out of Eden" (MCA), is a double CD, has 20 new songs and sounds like the band never left the scene.

In fact it has been active on the road of, grossing more than \$250 million and playing to some 2.4 million fans worldwide since reuniting in 1994 for the "Hell Freezes Over" tour. The band is planning to tour again in 2008 in support of the new album. (Attention, MTV Philippines and Ovation Productions.)

The first agenda for making the "Eden" album, according to guitarist/vocalist Glenn Frey, "was to understand that we were making a record for our fans ... We were able to transcend worrying about whether we needed to make a modern record, a country record, a rock 'n' roll record ... It falls under the umbrella of Eagles songs."

The content is part social commentary, part examination of relationships familial and romantic, and part reinvention of the band via new songs that fit easily within the Eagles canon.

Drummer/vocalist Don Henley is still Frey's main songwriting partner. But the presence of bassist Timothy Schmit and lead guitarist Joe Walsh (they sing two songs each) can't be underestimated.

The "Eden" CD is available locally in record bars and digitally on www.eaglesband.com.

'Complete Clapton'



AMY Winehouse

COMPLETE CLAPTON

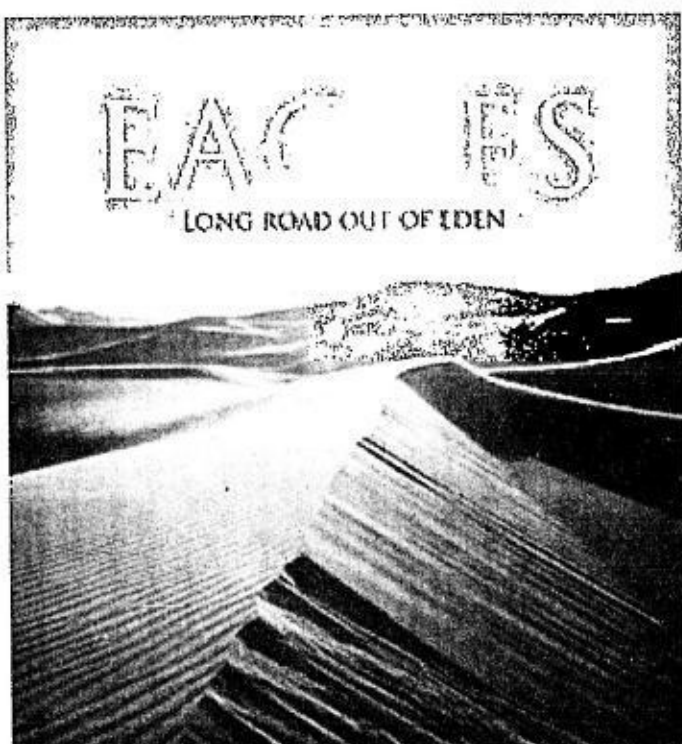
The new album follows critically-acclaimed, platinum-selling disc "In Your Honor" which was released in 2005. The band's remainder of that year's album was released worldwide, including arenas worldwide, including Hyde Park which has 85,000 fans.

Whitney's 'Ultimate Collection'
Whitney Houston's "Ultimate Collection" (Sony BMG) contains tracks including early favorites "How Will I Know," "I Wanna Dance with Somebody," "Saving Love" and "Where Do Broken Hearts Go," as well as more recent hits such as "It's Not Right But It's Beautiful" and "My Love Is Your Love."

But the album's highlight is the ballads "I Will Always Love You" and "Greatest Love of All" and "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" in Time.

Use on course to have this year's biggest seller in UK

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Reuters



Eric Clapton's "Complete Clapton" (MCA) is another double-CD, a career retrospective of one of the world's greatest guitarists.

After a busy year filled with a world tour, an epic guitar festival and an absorbing autobiography comes this two-CD set—a 36-track compilation featuring songs from Clapton's recording career with Cream ("I Feel Free," "Sunshine of Your Love," "White Room," "Crossroads," "Badge"), Blind Faith ("Presence of the Lord"), Derek and the Dominos ("Bell Bottom Blues," "Layla"), plus lots of material from his solo albums (including tracks from "Unplugged") and some co-produced works with BB King and J.J. Cale.

Led Zep's 'Mothership'

Warner Music honors Led Zeppelin with the release of "Mothership," a 24-track, two-CD collection that spans the British band's career.

All eight of its classic studio albums are represented here, with tracks being personally selected by Jimmy Page, Robert Plant and John Paul Jones. It includes landmark songs such as "Whole Lotta Love," "Immigrant Song," "Kashmir," "Rock And Roll," "Dazed And Con-

fused," and "Stairway to Heaven." The set also includes new liner notes.

Slated for a simultaneous release, Warner Home Video debuts a brand-new DVD, HD-DVD and Blu-Ray editions of "The Song Remains the Same," now for the first time with all 14 songs from the original concert at Madison Square Garden.

Early buyers will be treated to a special, one-time-only, cinema screening of "Led Zeppelin: Live," a two-hour music documentary at Robinson's Movieworld on Jan. 18, 2008.

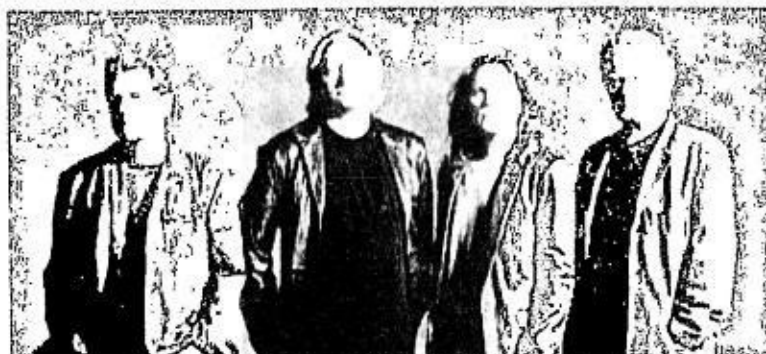
Matchbox 20 returns

Matchbox 20's album "Exile on Mainstream" (Warner) has six new songs and 11 greatest hits including "Push," "3am," "If You're Gone," "Bent," "Disease," "Unwell," "Real World," among others.

Nearly five years had elapsed since the band's last studio album, and in the interim, singer Rob Thomas had launched a chart-topping solo career.

Foo Fighters' 6th CD

Foo Fighters' new album "Echoes, Silence, Patience and Grace" (Sony BMG) is the band's sixth studio release and marks the first time that singer-guitarist Dave Grohl played piano on a record, and the band's use of a string quartet on a couple of tracks.



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OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2007 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL



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DID YOU KNOW...

Willie Nelson's \$40,000 thanks to Vancouver

VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON—WILLIE Nelson has not forgotten the town that knew him before he was famous. The 74-year-old country singer has

donated \$40,000 to Vancouver, the southwestern Washington city where he sold some of his first records a half-century ago.

In the late 1950s, Nelson worked as a disc jockey for Vancouver station KVAN. He financed and recorded the single "No Place for Me" and sold it to

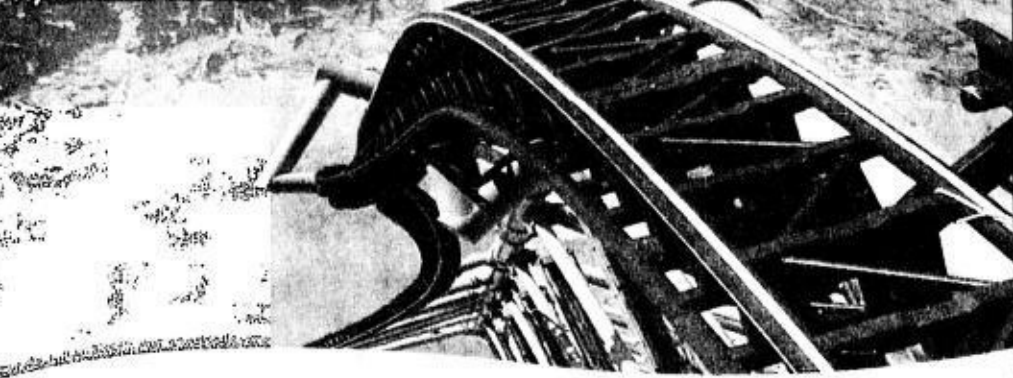
some of his listeners.

Vancouver received the \$40,000 check three weeks ago. Last week, the city gave \$15,000 to the Humane Society of Washington and \$15,000 to the Boys and Girls Club. AP

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glorietta

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* based on activated accounts as of September 30, 2007.

See direct mail for more details. Promo runs until March 31, 2008. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4517. Series of 2007.

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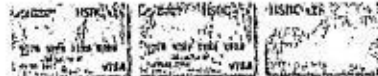
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Naughty and nice lines from celebs in 2007

It seems the more controversies there are, the merrier the Christmas in show biz



ALFRED Vargas



KATRINA Halili



DENNIS Trillo



AMALIA Fuentes

STARS BETTER WATCH OUT. THEY BETTER not cry. They better not lie. I'm telling you why. Santa Show Biz Santa is coming to town. He sees who celebs are sleeping with. He knows when they're awake. He knows when they've been bad or good. So be good not just for gimmicks' sake.

Here are some of the naughty and nice lines that Dollywood gathered from celebs this year... The more [controversies], the merrier the Christmas!

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Anne Carvajal

Naughty

Amalia Fuentes: "Joey (Stevens) can't even remember his own age. How can people believe whatever else he says? His memory doesn't serve him right anymore. That 75-year-old relic needs his GF for his ego. He is out of my

house, so his lover should build him a home for the aged."

Katrina Halili: "Marian (Rivera) and I are not friends. We are just work mates."

Gloria Diaz: "Beauty is skin deep but ugliness is to the bone."

Dennis Trillo: "I'd rather that my baby Calix didn't find out about the 'gulo' between his mom (Carlene Aguilar) and Cristine Reyes. He might get the wrong idea."

Alessandra de Rossi: "I don't make make beso-beso to someone I don't like. Ayokong magpaka-show biz."

Sunshine Cruz: "Pag may atraso sa akin si Buboy (Cesar Montano), it's not enough that I accept his apology. He has to keep proving that he won't do it again."

Cristine Reyes: "Si Dennis (Trillo) ang lalaki. Siya ang dapat umareglo ng gulo. Babae ako na dapat pinagtatangol."

Sam Milby: "I have nothing more to say to Lolit (Solis) and neither have I anything else to say about her."

Nino Muhlach (on meeting his 11-year-old love child for the first time): "Di ko pwedeng i-deny na anak ko eh kasi carbon copy ko!"

Nice

Lea Salonga: "As a person from show business, I accept that the public at large will be curious and want to know about what happens in private. But what I don't appreciate is when people from show business inflict their private lives upon the rest of the world. Their scandals... their dirty laundry... the things in their worlds that no one else has the right to know."

Marian Rivera: "When I auditioned for 'Marimar,' I didn't allow myself to be obsessed with getting the part. I just gave it my all and didn't expect anything."

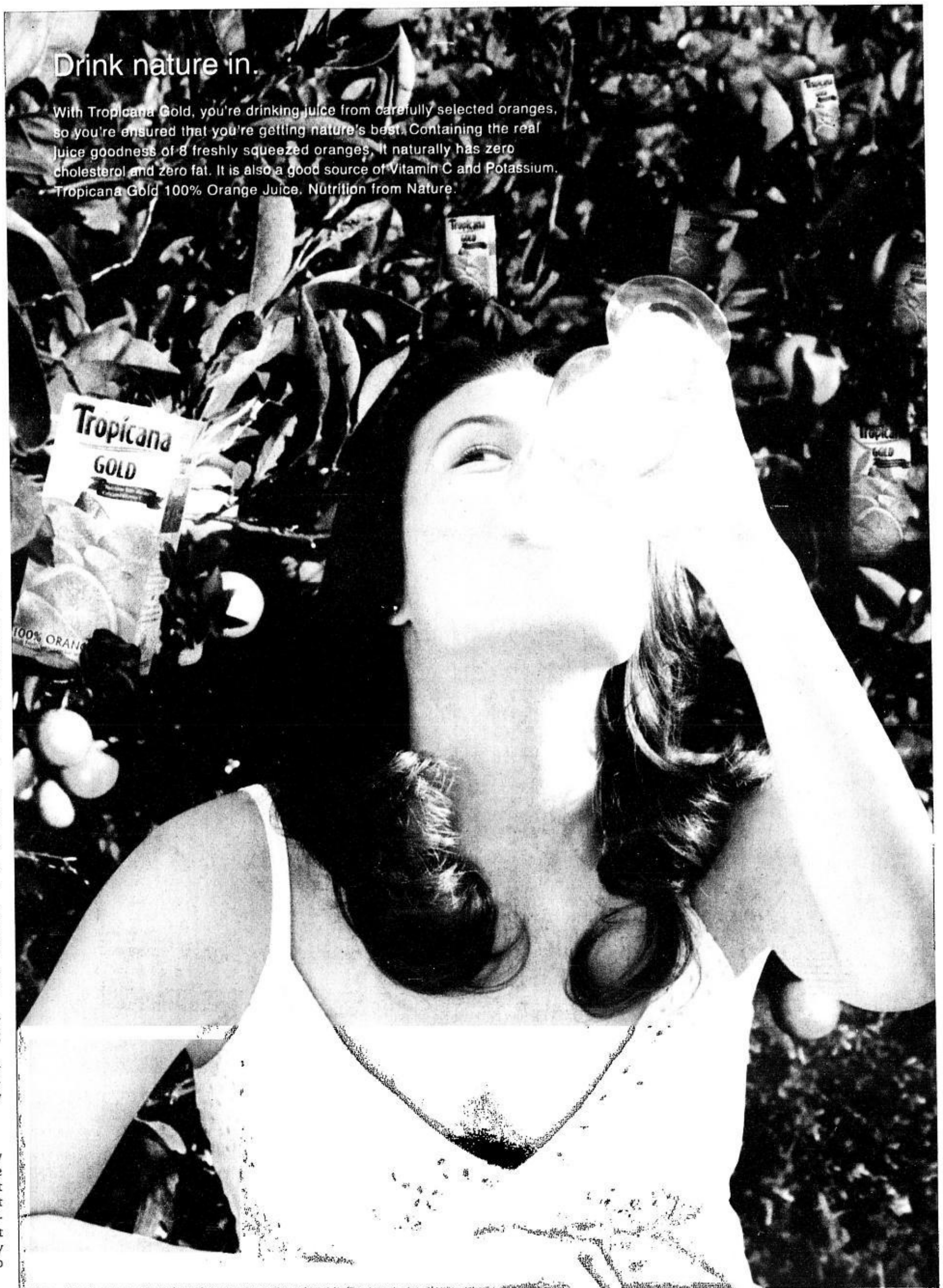
Cesar Montano: "When I lost in the elections, my world didn't stop. On the contrary, it made me look in other directions and I realized that there's so much more I can do."

Ai Ai de las Alas: "Even if nine months na akong walang kontrata sa Channel 2, I stayed on out of gratitude."

Dingdong Dantes: "My personal relationship with Karylle has nothing to do with my professional relationship with Marian and vice-versa. Both of them deserve respect."

Ogie Alcasid: "Michelle (Van Eimeren) has chosen to live quietly in Australia. I

NAUGHTY/F3

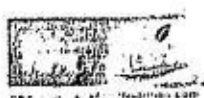


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Naughty and nice lines from celebs in 2007

From page F1

hope people will respect her privacy by not dragging her name into the issue about me and Regine. Nagkakaintindihan kaming tatlo."

Nyoy Volante: "Even if Nina and I have split up, I still am protective of her."

Gretchen Barretto (after her kiss scandal with John Estrada): "I have learned to silence my guilt and shame. Tony and I have gone beyond hurting. We recognized, despite our faults, we still want to go home to just each other. Waking up knowing we are flawed and just the same accepting it."

Jomari Yllana: "I'm in no position to comment on anything about Pops and Martin. Iba'yung sa kanila. Iba'yung sa amin ni Pops."

John Pratts: "Of course, it always starts with physical attraction but that shouldn't be the basis of a relationship. Beauty fades. Character stays."

Alfred Vargas: "Everyday in show biz is a humbling experience. You always encounter someone more talented and better-looking than yourself."

Christian Bautista: "Being so busy, I usually just

go in and out of our place. Then my mom told me, 'Please remember that this is a home and not just a ly."

Koreanovela

Koreanovela fever is back on

ABS-CBN's Prime-time Bida with "Spring Waltz" starting today (after "PBB Celeb Edition

2"). It follows the compelling story of Jeric (See Do-Young) and Arianne (Han Hyo Joo),

whose childhood friendship is put to the test when Jeric assumes the identity of a wealthy cou-

ple's dead son, in exchange for Arianne's heart surgery. Seoul's well-loved show is bound to

warm your soul.

E-mail watering-holeshangrila@yahoo.com.

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NASHA MAS SAM ENGLISH WITH EUGENE DIMINO BOOTS SANSON-ROA
AND DENNIS STRILLO

SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 9

Starring LUKE TUVERIA TOREL LEE PAUL OYLA
GINA ALABANG JONTON NEVILL JOHN LUNA JOJO SANTOS
SOPHIA MARIE HECTOR REYES JAYME LEE JAYSON NUNZA ANDREA ARRIAGA

AN OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2007 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL-PHILIPPINES

Text: SHAKE to 239 PLDT TOUCH CARD

NOW SHOWING! GP

MALL TOUR: DEC-29 REGAL EXTRAVAGANZA; GLORIETTA ACTIVITY CENTER, 5PM

Maricel Soriano Eric Quizon
Marian Rivera Shaina Magdayao Yasmien Kurdi Eugene Domingo and Ms. Gloria Romero
Mark Herras Rayver Cruz Jiro Manji Bearwin Nely

Bahay Kubo
A Pinoy Mano Po!

A Film by Joel C. Lamangan, dgpi

Also Starring Isabella de Leon Sam Bumatay Rita Iringan

AN OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2007 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL-PHILIPPINES

Text: BAHAY to 239 PLDT TOUCH CARD

REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and RYM www.regalmultimedia.net/bahaykubo

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MALL TOUR: DEC-29 REGAL EXTRAVAGANZA; GLORIETTA ACTIVITY CENTER, 5PM

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations. Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

GLORIETTA 1	1 DEATH PROOF	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 BATANES	4 HITMAN
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	GUARANTEED SEATS
GREENBELT 1	4 DEATH PROOF	5 GONE BABY GONE	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 MARTIAN CHILD
GREENBELT 3	1 MARTIAN CHILD	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	GUARANTEED SEATS
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 MARTIAN CHILD	4 GONE BABY GONE
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FRED CLAU	4 LUST CAUTION
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ENCHANTED	3 MARTIAN CHILD	4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
TRINOMA	1 BATANES	2 DEATH PROOF	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	4 MARTIAN CHILD
	5 ENCHANTED	6 FRED CLAU	7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	GUARANTEED SEATS

AT THE MALLS

Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324

Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala

glorietta

Taylor Hicks Live!
December 18; 7pm; Glorietta 4 Park

GREENBELT

Taylor Hicks Live!
December 19; 7pm; Greenbelt 3 Park

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

Christian Bautista Live!
December 22; 6pm; Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU

Christmas Chorale featuring Akafellas
December 22; 7pm; Activity Center

MARKET! MARKET!

Japan Foundation Karate Demonstration
December 18; 6pm; Activity Center

Onstage

Repertory Philippines presents TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE
January 11 to 27, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala MUSEUM

WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso
November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Tri Noma

Taylor Hicks Live!
December 20; 7pm; Activity Center

FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase.
See leaflets for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-938, Series of 2007
December 1 to 31

AYALA MALLS CINEMAS and REGAL ENTERTAINMENT present

REGAL Extravaganza 2007

MEET & GREET the stars of

SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 9

DESPERADAS

all they need is love... and can their men give love?

Bahay Kubo DECEMBER 29, 2007 • 6:00 pm
A Pinoy Mano Po!

Reserved seats for the first 200 moviegoers who will present their SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9, DESPERADAS, and BAHAY KUBO movie tickets purchased in any Ayala Malls Cinemas on December 29, 2007.

Christmas at TriNoma

TriNoma Concierge Hotline:
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Simbang Gabi

Starting December 15 at 6 PM
4th Level TriNoma Park

Wrapping Corner

Avail of wrapping services by A Perfect Creation at discounted prices.
1st Level Concierge near Main Entrance

Fit for the Holidays

Group Exercises by Fitness First Platinum
Mon/Wed/Fri of December
at 10:30AM and 6 PM
3rd Level TriNoma Park

Christmas Moments

A Multimedia Workshop
December 13-15 (3 to 5 PM)
3rd Level TriNoma

glorietta

GREENBELT

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

AYALA CENTER CEBU

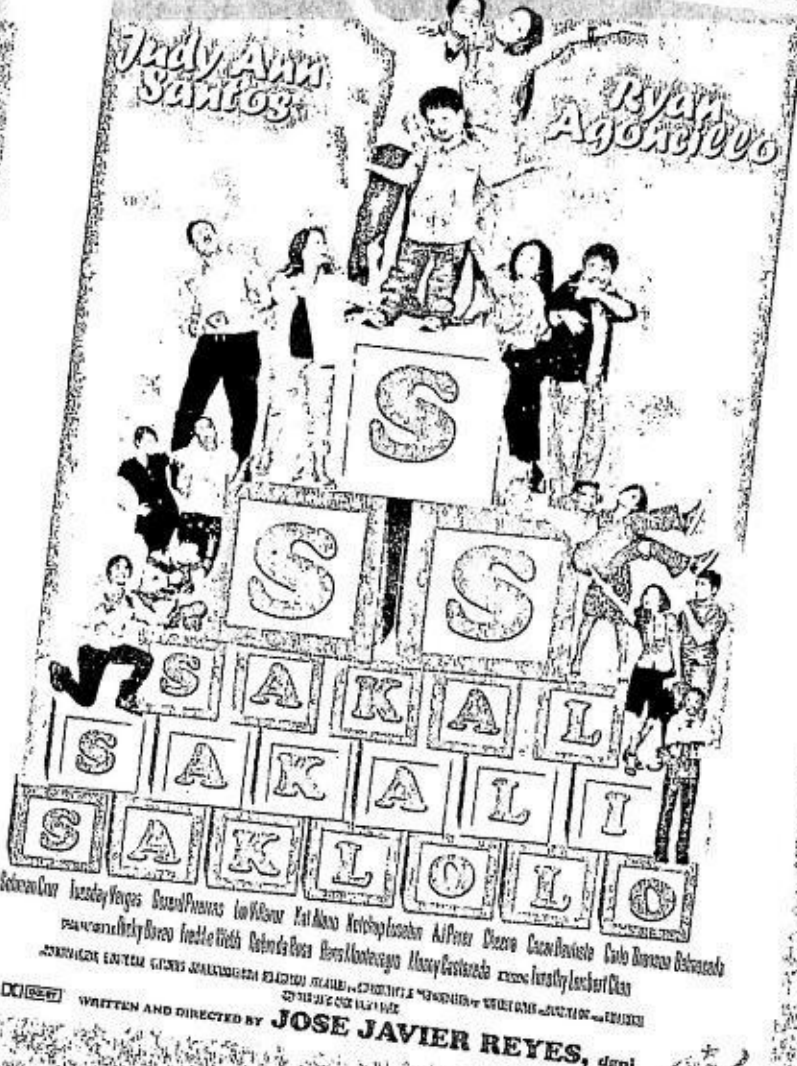
MARKET! MARKET!

TriNoma

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2007
JINGGOY ESTRADA and LORNA TOLENTINO
RAYANI AGUIYANI EUGENE DOMINGO ARRON VILLAFLORE introducing JULIAN ESTRADA
SHAINA MAGDAYAO RAYVER CRUZ
with the special participation of ADEL TAMANO



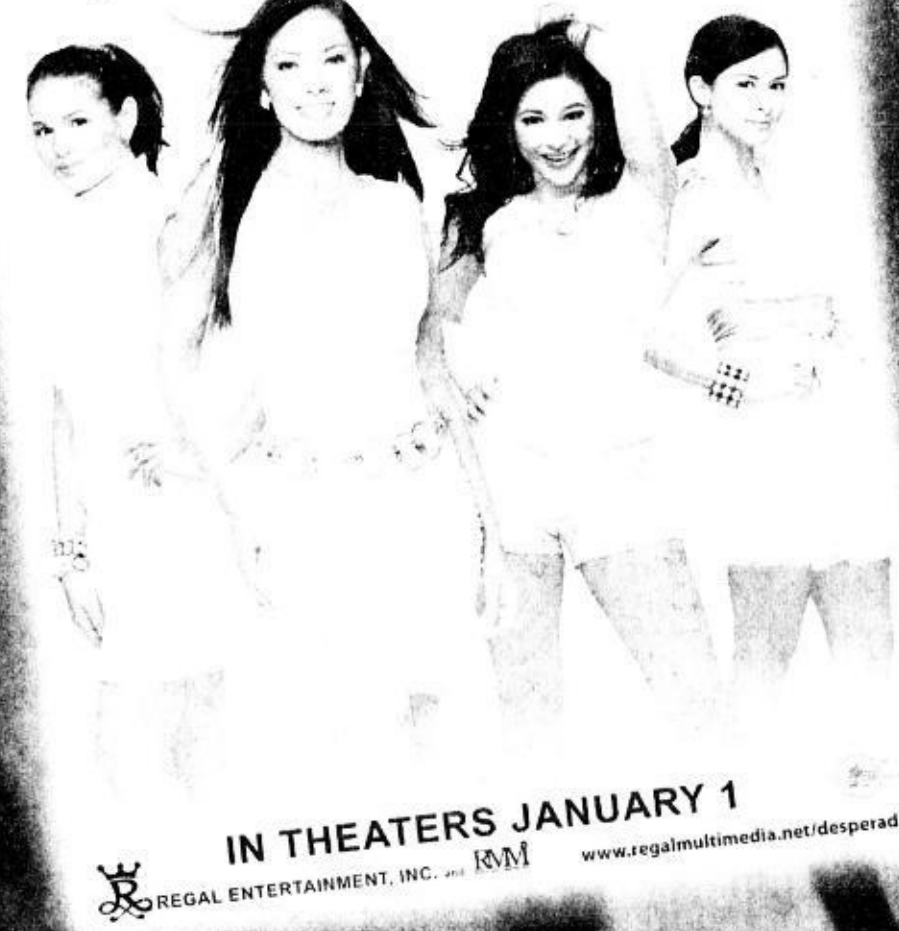
METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL - PHILIPPINES
OFFICIAL ENTRY
Ariel Ureta Dominie Ochoa and Juliana Palermo
Ms. Gloria Diaz Derek Ramsay Ms. Gina Pareño



Maricel Soriano Eric Oulzon
Marian Rivera Shaina Magdayao Yasmien Kurdi Eugene Domingo and Ms. Gloria Honejo
Mark Herras Rayver Cruz Jiro Arino Bearwin Jelly
Bahay Kubo
A Pinoy Mano Po!
A film by Joel C. Lamangan, dgp



RUFFA GUTIERREZ RUFFA MAE QUINTO IZA CALZADO MARIAN RIVERA
A film by Joel C. Lamangan, dgp
DESPERADAS
all they need is love...
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WENDELL RAMOS Jay R TJ TRINIDAD Introducing WILL DEVAUGHN



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